

Sevens

**- Volume 19 -
Extras**

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[Yoraikun Translation]

Intermission

The Emperor Who Ran Away

Aria Arc

(TL:The Chronological Order of these stories: Miranda-> Novem-> Aria-> Vera-> Shannon)

“I... don’t want to be eaten up anymore.”

As he cried out a complaint, Lyle found himself in Aria’s mansion of the inner palace.

The inner palace... a part of the new capital’s palace vast enough to hold a small town. Lyle’s harem lived inside the inner palace, and you could call the inner palace as a whole Lyle’s personal bedroom.

Inside the castle, the reason a small town was formed was to prepare a successor to the emperor. To enter the inner palace, you’d have to be Lyle’s wife, or perhaps a servant or maid. On top of that, there were the Valkyries led by Monica.

No men allowed. If any man apart from Lyle were to enter that danger zone, they would have to be one of his children born of the palace.

Even if you called it a mansion, it was for personal use, and not particularly large. But it was clearly bigger than a standard house. In that inner palace lined with detached houses- yards included- the roads were maintained, and where there were streets, you would even find shops.

There really was a small town there.

Dropping by Aria’s mansion in such an inner palace, Lyle sat on the sofa as he sought help from the girl.

In her own mansion, Aria pulled a chair, and sat in front of Lyle. The new capital’s

palace had been completed, and had lost the need to go outside and act as a site manager.

The frequency she went out of the inner palace in general was decreasing as well.

“...Even if you didn’t cry, I’d have let you stay. I’ll just say it, but the inner palace itself is your belonging, so you don’t have to act so servile.”

“There are few things that actually belong to me. Just my office, and the small room behind it is all. I just want to live a quiet life there, but Miranda locked it up.”

“You reap what you sow, is all I can say.”

The reason Lyle didn’t think of the inner palace as his own was because he had his own office. A room placed as if hidden behind it was furnished with a bed, bookshelf and desk. Rather than a closet of sorts, a studio apartment had been prepared. With functional bath and shower, and some casual clothes left around.

It truly was Lyle’s room.

It had some width to it, and it was dubious whether to call it a small room at all. But from Lyle’s point of view, that much living space was already more than enough. He had experienced a period of adventurer life, so he even felt a great sense of comfort there.

For that sake, even with the inner palace completed, he showed no signs of leading his feet there...

“It’s because you hole yourself up in that room that Miranda locked it away. Sleep over here more often.”

“I still had to prepare my heart! I’m just... I was just a little embarrassed. I was still in the process of studying the necessary knowledge.”

Aria sighed. The only ones he could ask about such things were the ones he got along with on a regular basis: Maksim and Damien. As a result, there was no way they could teach him anything, and Lyle turned to a hopeless means of asking Monica.

(No wonder Miranda would feel a sense of danger.)

“And Miranda’s terrible. When I came to the inner palace troubled, she invited me to her room... prepared some food and a bath for me... and there was only one bed.”

As Lyle tried to get her to return the key, he was invited to her mansion, and lain hand on. Since the order was wrong, Novem showed her rage, so Lyle was led off to Novem’s mansion next.

A tense air persisted between Novem and Miranda, and whenever the two met within the inner palace, everyone present would flee.

And Lyle, the target of their competition, had come to Aria’s room today.

“There was nothing scary in that story. I mean, you just have to drop by the mansion of whoever you like. Though a few of them aren’t around.”

Clara wasn’t in the inner palace, she was in the library whipping up research documents, and Eva was out spreading her songs.

Ludmilla, Gracia and Elza had to leave their positions to the next generations, and were preparing to make their way there.

“And it’s not as if she treats you poorly, right?”

Lyle raised a dry laugh.

“She said she’d prepare my favorite foods, and every course was a feast. What’s more, she blatantly put out food to say, ‘good luck tonight,’ all of it. It’s heavy on my stomach! I’m still young! I’m young, and yet she put out what would equate to doping! The bath was the same! She was real gracious about it, but what is this!? What was that!? It’s almost as if she had me the moment I got into the bath! Does she really want to mentally abuse me that much!?”

The latter half came out incomprehensibly.

From the point of view of a normal man, that would be a scene to rejoice over. But from Lyle’s point of view, carrying over that treatment to dozens...

There was no way he would hold up. In their competition, Novem and Miranda weren’t

seeing those around them. Aria was sure it wasn't just her misunderstanding.

As Aria stood, she let out a sigh.

"I'll throw something together, so sit there and wait. Or you could go take a bath first."

"Thank you! Ah! If possible, I want something light!"

As Lyle said he had come to hate heavy meals, Aria nodded. Lyle headed off to the bath.



"This is it. This! This is what I wanted to eat."

Looking over Lyle satisfied at his light meal, Aria seemed relieved. As the new capital's completion approached, large loads of work pertaining to rule were flowing over to him.

Much of it was handled with Lianne at the center, but even so he was busy.

It would be difficult to put off gathering the country representatives and holding a ceremony any longer, so the preparations for that were necessary as well.

There, making a face as if it were only natural to be there, Monica made her entrance. What's more, from within Aria's mansion.

"Once you're done eating you have to brush your teeth. Now start preparing to sleep."

"...How did you get in here?"

She'd have noticed if she came through the door whether she wanted to or not, but Monica had appeared from the back. There was a Valkyrie stationed, and she'd report to Aria if anything happened. By the way, that Valkyrie was on team Aria.

Monica stuck up her thumb as she made a triumphant face.

"I knew this would happen, so I made a secret passage to the inner palace. This Monica recognizes the castle as her own territory, so she always has a grasp on everything!"

Looking at Monica as she struck a pose, Aria gave up. In a sense, Monica was the ruler of this castle.

Its management and maintenance were under her charge, and if Monica was taken out, life in the palace would prove most difficult.

While bringing the Valkyries together, she even helped support Lyle in his work. "I'm being abused. At this very moment, my high specs are actually being abused!!" or so she cried out for joy, and it seems she had found true happiness.

"Well, just go back when you're done with your business."

"H-how terrible! I just want to stay by my damn chicken's side!"

Monica pretended to cry, but as Lyle dozed off she went quiet. Aria carried Lyle over to the bed. She lay him down and tucked him into the large bed prepared in her room.

She was also yawning, so she stretched out and lay down herself. Monica headed off to a waiting room of the mansion. A room a servant or maid would use. "Take your time. All of us earnestly await the birth of a chick." She said as she glared at Aria.

Lyle had fallen asleep instantly from his fatigue, so Aria held his hand and dozed off beside him.

"Good night, Lyle."

Intermission

The Emperor Who Ran Away

Vera Arc

“Today, you see, I met with Fidel-san. He was all smiles, but did anything happen? It was ridiculously scary.”

Vera’s mansion in the inner palace was decorated with guns in glass cases. Other than that, there were small ships and other ornaments that made one think of the sea, even when it was a mansion on the same, its contents were quite different from Aria’s.

For the guns, Monica and the Valkyries worried that a chick might get injured, so they prepared the glass cases in excessive care, but you could see where they were displayed in the room before the talk of babies came up.

The one who stopped by that room was Lyle, to whom Aria had told it was no good to hole up in her mansion every day, and that he had to go see the other girls as well.

A few days was one thing, but he had spent over a week at Aria’s place, and even Aria had scolded him, so he had decided to drop by and see Vera.

“My father? Well it’s true he looked happy today, but I haven’t really heard anything. More importantly, I heard you lingered around Aria’s place, but... why me? I heard Miranda recommended you go to Thelma-san or something.”

Passed her mid-thirties, and without any place left, Thelma had been included in the inner palace. Gastone stuck Aura with her and made it a limited-time offer.

Their motherland of Zayin was a country involved with Lyle from his early days, and they wanted to display the strong bond they had with the lad.

“No if Miranda recommended it, that means it’s a trap, or so I can’t help but doubt. She invited me to her mansion and ate me up, after all.”

“...Miranda doesn't choose her means. But you see, Lyle. This is your fault. When a few months have passed since the inner palace was complete, you didn't come here once, and spent all your time in your office. What's more, being taught the knowledge from an automaton, of course Miranda would feel desperate. Novem holds a deep belief in your love to her, so this will just tear us apart more.”

Vera informed Lyle of just how worried Baldoir was when he consulted with Novem and Miranda.

Since Lyle had grown apart from his close friends Maksim and Damien, Baldoir had grown worried.

Founding an empire was well and all.

Taking the throne, so be it.

But not making successors would be troublesome. If talks came to adopting a child from a Walt house branch family, there was a possibility that war would break out.

While there were plenty of talented kids among them, the problem would be the forces that would form trying to put them up on pedestals.

“...I just wanted prepare my heart. Up to this point, the environment was always one such to say, ‘lay hands on anyone and we'll lose the war,’ you know. So there's no way I can make a sudden transition to a, ‘now choose someone already!’ environment. I'm not saying I wasn't going to do it, but couldn't we have just taken it slowly?”

While there were some points to be heard in Lyle's opinion, heirs to the emperor's throne was already an important issue.

From Vera's point of view, her own children would succeed the Trēs House someday, or perhaps help support the Trēs House up.

You'd find them quicker counting the kids in order of throne rights from bottom to top. The reason being Vera wasn't a noble. And the legal wife was Novem.

If Novem had a male child, they would be placed first in the line of succession without question. They'd surely become the imperial prince. If there weren't any problems, that is.

“It’s fine and all that you came over to me, but you have to prioritize the points that should be priority. Thelma-san, you see... she’s got an age problem as well. You should get to her as fast as you can.”

Lyle made a dubious face.

“From my point of view, she’s old enough to be my mother. Well I am thinking to hurry, but, since Miranda was the one who said it, I ended up raising my guard.”

“Why are you so wary? It’s not like she did anything terrible to you.”

Lyle crossed his arms, going into serious thought.

“Well if you say it aloud, it does sound like she was just serving me, but from my point of view, it was a sneak attack. What’s more, I’m terrified. Of Novem... and Novem.”

Her sense of rivalry blazing up, it could be said Novem in turn served Lyle too much.

On top of Miranda’s sneak attack, the defiling of the sequence put Novem into a rage. There had been a ruckus about a portion of palace being blown away.

After that, their feud to draw Lyle’s attention had only intensified.

“What are you going to do when Ludmilla and Gracia get here? Elza’s settled down these days, but this can’t turn out any good.”

“You’re right, it can’t. What shall I do.”

Seeing his daily fatigue from governmental work coming out in him, Vera covered her face with her right hand. There were some things one just couldn’t get used to, and the current Lyle had way too much work on his plate. That his system of rule had yet to be instituted was one of the larger reasons, but that Lyle himself had grown capable of handling that amount of work was just as large of a reason in itself.

His experience up to now gave Lyle considerable power when it came to governmental affairs. And his current deskwork was reforging him by the day.

But competence and exhaustion were different problems entirely.

(No wonder Novem and Miranda prepared food to give him stamina. Just looking at him is enough to worry you.)

A worn-out Lyle.

Chased by paperwork every day.

(It would be too much for me. I think I'd be able to somewhat endure managing the finances, but government is something different from business. And my involvement isn't met with much applause.)

Vera hailed from a merchant house. For that sake, there were many who thought it wasn't a good thing she involved herself with politics. If she didn't leave things to Lyle, then the Beim of old would revive in no time... the merchants of death would rally, revive the city, and by the power of money, return to being an existence, the empire couldn't lay hands on so easily.

It's precisely because she understood that, that Vera stayed quiet. But- ironic in a sense- it was precisely because of it that Vera had become a sort of healing oasis to Lyle.

"Today's fine, but you've got to properly make for Thelma-san's place in the near future."

"I know. I will."

As they carried on such a conversation, Monica had stepped into the room before anyone had realized. A Valkyrie was clasped around Monica's legs, trying to stop her advance.

"You piece of scrap! This district is under our jurisdiction! Return from whence you came!"

The Valkyrie supporting Vera tried to drive Monica away, but Monica put up resistance as she took a memo.

She didn't really need to write anything down, but she was playing the part of a secretary.

“Heey! Let me go! My jurisdiction lies wherever my chicken may be. Managing the Chicken Dickwad’s schedule is also one of my duties!... By the way, damn chicken.”

Looking on her feud with the Valkyrie as a matter of course, Lyle gave a reply. He wasn’t particularly surprised.

He was accustomed to the existence that was Monica.

“What is it?”

“Since you’ve been commuting to Aria’s place lately, that vixen Novem is restless. You should go to her before something explodes.”

Hearing that, Lyle looked up at the ceiling, focusing his eyes on something far, far away.

At the final decisive battle, at the end of the end, he had confessed his love before several hundred thousand, so why was he running away from that girl now?

As Vera thought that, Lyle hung his head.

“I’m staying with Vera today. Maybe Thelma-san tomorrow. And then I’ll drop by Novem’s place.”

Vera was relieved.

Perhaps Lyle was feeling pressure from Novem’s enthusiasm, thought Vera as she decided to just sleep with him in the purest sense today.

(It feels a bit lacking, but when I see him so tired... well, there will be plenty of opportunities from now on, so let’s just endure it for now.)

She recalled the proposal that she leave the inner palace once she left Fidel a grandson.

But seeing the worn-out Lyle...

(Well, it’s true he might need someone more lenient with him for now.)

She thought as she invited Lyle out for a meal.

Fifth Generation Head (; ° ㄥ): “That’s why I told you! Harems aren’t a game! I said it! Let yourself be worn out, and you let your guard down. And what that leads to is nothing but trouble... do your best, you can do it Lyle!”

Sixth Generation Head (´ • ω • `): “You could’ve given that advice in my time...”

Fifth Generation Head (° ㄥ): “...With you, everyone you chose was a bit... I think the problem comes before any advice is concerned.”

Intermission

The Emperor Who Ran Away

Shannon Arc

“You sold me out!”

“Ahahahah, and what of it. I work for my own sake alone. Now then, to be totally honest... it’s impossible for me to stop my sister when she’s serious! It’s impossible, I tell you!!”

Shannon waved her arms around as she described just how serious her sister was. But from Lyle’s point of view, it was nothing he could laugh at.

“You’re the worst! Having Miranda after Novem would be rough, so I thought I could stick you in-between to get some rest! I thought it!”

Lyle had stopped by Shannon’s mansion the other day.

The day before that, he had gone to Novem’s, and while he should have been able to get some rest, he was making a worn-out face.

The reason Lyle dropped by Shannon’s place was because he lacked the stamina to brave the journey to Miranda.

Rest in Shannon’s mansion, and cultivate his strength.

But perhaps foreseeing his moves... in Shannon’s mansion lay Miranda in wait. Shannon had stayed over at Miranda’s mansion that night, and seeing Miranda when his guard was down, Lyle had let out a scream of, ‘Gyaaaaah!!’

Perhaps taking offense to that, Miranda had wrung Lyle out in various ways.

So today he had come to Shannon’s mansion to complain.

“Using me as a cushion, it’s your fault for having such naïve notions.”

Lyle looked over Shannon.

“What did you get for it, say it! What did you get for selling me out!?”

Gripping Shannon’s shoulders, Lyle shook her back and forth.

Shannon’s head jerked to and fro.

“W-who’d tell you. I-I’m just kidding! I’ll say it, so please stop. I sold you out for those jellies that roll around your mouth!”

“So I’m lower than jellies!?”

As Shannon parted from Lyle, ruffled as her hair was, she put a hand on her chest. While he’d known her for two years, Lyle noticed her chest hadn’t faced much development.

(This girl, compared to Miranda, she sure is flat.)

“They came out with a new flavor! I... wanted to be the first in the world to roll it around my mouth! For such glory, of course I’d sell out the likes of you! And wait... where are you looking, pervert!”

Shannon put in a kick.

As Lyle stepped back to dodge, he applied a poke to her forehead.

“Ow!”

Seeing Shannon hold her head in both hands, Lyle laughed.

“You sold out your emperor, little girl!”

There, Shannon scoffed.

“Hah! Being chased around by my sister and Novem, an emperor? Then that’s quite a pitiful emperor we have here. Hey, what do you have to say to that!”

As Shannon took a fighting pose, “Hmph! You’ve angered the emperor. Now cower before my wrath!” Said Lyle as he spread up his arms, and took a pose with one foot off the ground.

Shannon was the same as always.

Lyle had gone a bit strange with all his fatigue.

The ones looking over their ruckus were the delighted faces of Monica and some Valkyries.

Monica and the three Valkyries looked over the fight of the two in the mansion as they fell head over heels for their hopelessness.

As Monica’s drool leaked out, she wiped it with a handkerchief.

“What a hopeless pair. Their chick will certainly carry on the hopeless gene, and be a uselessly cute hybrid chick.”

The other Valkyries also seemed to be in bliss.

“They are cuter the more useless they are.”

“We shall make it so they won’t be able to live on without us.”

“I simply cannot wait to see what will come.”

At the end of the automaton’s murmurings, was the form of Lyle in gallant battle with Shannon.

“Biting is unfair! G-get off of me!”

“Fwut wup!”

Hearing the soft sounds of their blows, the automatons ascended to cloud nine. Monica even...

“Ufufufu, I’ve been able to witness quite a wonderful scene today. And my dreams of the future only continue to grow. The chick of these two shall be looked after by me...”

Before Monica's eyes, a blade stuck out. The Valkyries held up their weapons with serious looks on their faces.

"No you shall not. Shannon-san's chicks shall be under our care."

Monica leapt back, producing a ladle and saucepan from her skirt and taking a stance. Equipped with the finest of cooking tools, Monica glared at the maid-uniformed armed Valkyries.

She made an undaunted smile.

"...Hmm, why don't we form an alliance here? To me, more happiness comes with more chicks. When I think of the young birds crying out, Monica, Monica as they beg for my pamperings, I shiver in excitement. We should help one another. I mean, the two of them are almost like siblings, are they not?"

The eyes of the four machines fell the forms of Lyle and Shannon, their arms on the ground as they lay out of breath.

"Y-you're not bad at all."

"Y-you're quite something yourself. I've got a better opinion of you."

They really were hopelessly cute, but at the rate things were going, no one could say how many years it would take until they had a child between them. While things were fine as they were, if possible, the automatons wanted to see their child.

The Valkyries looked among one another, and nodded amongst themselves. Putting their weapons away, one came forward as a representative and presented her right hand to Monica.

"Very well. We shall cooperate for the sake of the chick. But do not forget we hold the right of priority."

(Not that we'll let you lay a finger on it at all.)

Monica gripped the Valkyrie's hand, giving a stiff handshake.

"Yes, I mind it not. The priority lies with your front."

(Dream while you still can. The one who shall monopolies the damn chicken and his chicks is this Monica alone.)

The automatons all thought over how to steal a march on one another.

While they shook hands with a smile, some muddled feelings swirled around beneath.



A long while in the future, even Shannon had a child with Lyle.

At the time, the Valkyries' and Monica's spirits had reached levels never seen before.

"Uselessly cute. A hybrid of cuteness and hopelessness!"

Or so they rejoiced, but as they watched the child grow, they could only drop their shoulders in disappointment.

Surprisingly enough, Shannon's children all turned out to be remarkably talented.

Again and again, on the second and the third they would place their expectations, but every single time, those expectations would be betrayed, and the child would grow up a genius.

Of the children of Shannon and Lyle, some even say came a woman of Milleia's caliber, or not...

Milleia. ° (* ° ' ∇ ` °) ° ノ 彡: "Shannon's daughter is just like me lol, how cute lol."

Seventh Generation Head (• ω • `): "...I pity them. Good grief, my aunt's blood sure is thick..."

Oh you (' ∇ `); y = ─ (° ∇ °) • ∴. Bang

Milleia: "Here's your reward, Brod-kun."

Seventh Generation Head: "Thank you most dearly!"

Intermission

The Emperor Who Couldn't Run Away

Novem Arc

"Oh pitiful Lyle-sama... tricked by that Miranda."

"...Oy, stop it. Don't get any closer. Someone save me!"

Lyle's office.

The day after Lyle had been fooled by Miranda.

The room behind the office you could call his private room had been firmly locked up.

Saying he didn't want to go to the inner palace anymore, when night came, Lyle tried to spend it in his office. Then came Novem.

"It will be fine. I will never try to deceive you, Lyle-sama. I merely came to tell you fair and square that I've finished with my preparations!"

"A girl shouldn't be saying such things! I, even after all that's happened, I still have dreams of women! Please believe me. My fantasies... please let me see the dreams I dream! I want to stay deceived! I don't want to know the truth! The truth... it all does naught but hurt the hearts of man!"

Lured to the inner palace by Miranda, she went and had his way with him.

And today he had lamented, "This isn't how I wanted it to be!" But Novem smiled as she shook her head to the side.

"Lyle-sama, I'm sure you already understand. And once you know, there is no turning back. Now come to the inner palace with me. If it's dreams you desire, I'll show you as many as you want on the bed."

As Novem snapped her fingers, the Valkyries flooded in.

“Y-you all!? Why are you cooperating with Novem? I thought you were hostile to her!”

Representing the Valkyries, one unit stepped forward. From the pink ribbon fastening her hair, he could tell it was Unit Seventy One.

“...The enemy of an enemy is a friend. If it will free our master from that scrap heap called Monica, then we will become that which goes bump in the night.”

As Lyle was driven to the far wall, he tried to call for allies.

“Kuh! There’s no helping it. I can only rely on... Moni...”

“Even if you call her, Monica isn’t coming. I already entrusted it to Baldoir and some Valkyries to apprehend her.”

Novem had first dealt with the troublesome Monica. Lyle was cornered.

“W-wait I just want to...”

Lyle tried to get away by any means, but subdued by Valkyries and lifted up, he began his move towards the Inner Palace.

Novem smiled.

“In the time it takes for us to reach my mansion, I’ll hear out everything you want to say. It’s alright. I’ve already prepared the food and the bath.”

(I-I have to run. I have to get away!)

Even lifted up by the Valkyries, Lyle squirmed. The wire that bound him seemed to be custom-made, and it didn’t tear so easily.

“I’m tired today...”

“And so you’ll be resting in my mansion. Don’t worry. You just have to lay down, and I’ll do the rest.”

“As a man, I can’t just...”

“Oh, in that case, do your best.”

Nothing he said would liberate him. Fully understanding that, Lyle stopped resisting and fell limp. Along the way, they passed by Baldoir who confirmed his state.

Lyle looked at Baldoir, begging for salvation.

“Oy, Baldoir!”

“Lyle-sama, I’ll get your office back in order for you.”

Lyle watched Baldoir’s back as he left the area.

(Kuh! That man pursues the interests of the empire more than my interests as an individual. He isn’t wrong. He isn’t wrong, but... if this is how it’s going to be, I’ll use the authority of the empire to find him a new partner.)

As he thought that, Lyle arrived at a place under strict security.

On the other side of the gate guarded by two Valkyrie units lay Lyle’s inner palace. No, the inner palace prepared for the emperor.

A small town lay inside the castle.

It was surely a bizarre sight.

“Making something like this... that’s why I was opposed!”

There, Novem made it clear.

“It was a necessary measure. In essence, it’s your fault for not laying a hand no matter how much time passed. You understand the worry of those around, do you not?”

“Kuh! I can’t refute that!”

Form the eyes of those around, he only associated with Maksim and Damien, a biased sample, and as jokes didn’t get through to Baldoir, Lyle had ended up relying on Monica.

The wimp part of him still persisted. At the point he turned to Monica, those around

already experienced quite a sense of panic.

Lyle had noticed how restless Baldoir had become.

(But just getting right to it without any preparations is no good, right!? So it's my bad for trying to at least get the knowledge alone!? It's my fault!?)

As he entered the inner palace, Lyle looked around. There, he saw a single building with a sheet draped over it.

(Huh? That's strange? I got a report saying the inner palace was completed, but are they still constructing something?)

Perhaps it really wasn't completed, or they had decided to construct something new, Lyle Thought as he arrived at the most splendid estate of the inner palace.

As the official empress, Novem's mansion was constructed especially large. There was an order in place, and the splendor of the mansions had a ranking to them as well.

But even the smallest mansion, from Lyle's point of view, was plenty big enough.

"...It's needlessly large."

There, the Valkyries released Lyle and lowered him onto the floor. Novem turned to him.

"Well then. Lyle-sama. Would you like a meal? Or a bath? Or perhaps..."

Her face flushed, Novem wouldn't put the rest to mouth. And yet Lyle folded his arms and gave a normal reply.

"I'm quite famished, so a meal would be nice. Rather, you said you already prepared it, and I doubt it will taste the same once it's gone cold."

Novem made a dubious face; the surrounding Valkyries shook as they contained their laughter.

"T-then come into my mansion. The preparations are in order."

“A mansion in a castle, rather a whole town? This definitely feels strange. I heard there are stalls and shops running in the plaza.”

Lyle looked over the inner palace once more. Novem’s mansion alone was built on a higher point than the others, so he could look over it in its entirety.

Novem smiled as she answered.

“Normally, the women who enter here... the empress and mistresses don’t go out without reason. The stalls are geared towards attendants and maids. The shops are the same. Well, with a small town here, the children will be able to learn quite a bit, I thought.”

Hearing of children, Lyle imagined the sights of his own children running around. Thinking of that, it was an amazing environment.

(...No, do we really need it? They could just go outside like a normal person. Why did we have to build something like this?)

“Limited to women, there are places songs and the like are performed as well. Just a little while ago, one of Eva’s acquaintances was performing a song and a play... they came in from Zayin, so it was a performance of the Holy Knight and the Holy Maiden, though.”

Lyle could tell Novem’s atmosphere had changed a bit, as he was urged to enter the mansion in haste. And what awaited was...

“What’s this?”

“I prepared some food to give you strength. I made over half of it myself.”

Of the various dishes lining the large table, they were all to build stamina, a majority of them quite thick.

The taste looked thick too. Just looking at them was enough for Lyle’s hunger to feel sated. Of all else, thinking of what was to come, there were definitely some expectations placed on him.

“...T-thank you for the meal.”

“Yes, dig in.”

Before Novem’s smile, there was no way he could decline, so Lyle dived into the food. In his head, the face of the Fifth Generation head of his House floated up. The Fifth made a knowing face.

[Good luck.]

He seemed to say.

(Fifth... harems really are nothing but trouble. If this was how it was going to be, I’d have preferred being an adventurer.)

Second Generation Head (; • ∀ •): “Boys are those that always dream. That’s why, that’s why... harems must be fluffy, with the sweet taste of candy, or it’s no good!”

Third Generation Head (° ∀ °): “Harem stories are no good if they can’t give dreams to the good girls and boys! I’m worried that Lyle may dry up lol.”

Intermission

The Emperor Who Couldn't Run Away

Miranda Arc

As Lyle headed for his room in his office, he found Miranda and the Valkyries doing construction work under her instruction.

“Oy, what are you doing to my room!?”

As he frantically confirmed the door to his room, he noticed a number of sturdy locks had been fastened onto it. As Lyle panicked that he wouldn't be able to enter it like that, Miranda let out a light sigh.

“Lyle, at the end of the day, this is a break room, is it not? Why are you calling it, ‘my room’? The inner palace was built to be your room. You can't sleep in the break room forever!”

She called it a break room, but from Lyle's point of view, it was his own splendid living space. Its make was luxurious enough, and when all was said and done, he could call it nothing but his own room.

“N-no, that's... A-a man needs his own place of refuge! Yeah, that's why, you should just take off these locks...”

“That's no good. It's because you keep using this place that you never come to the inner palace, right? And I hear Monica's teaching you various things in that room.”

She's just giving me basic sex ed, or so Lyle couldn't say. He averted his eyes from Miranda, gave a vague answer and played if off.

“No, look, that's, you see... r-right! Where's Monica!? She promised to help out with my work...”

There, one of the Valkyries accompanying Miranda gave an immediate reply.

“Your work for the day should be over already. Recently, you have gotten even better at paperwork, master. Well, from our point of view, we feel a bit unsatisfied.”

His work was already long over. Hearing that, Lyle’s eyes swam around as he thought up an excuse.

But Miranda was smiling a bit.

“Don’t be so wary. From our point of view, if you don’t come to the inner palace, various rumors will come about.”

“I-I am sorry for that.”

Knowing they were troubled as well, Lyle repented. There, Miranda looked at him with a bit of worry.

“Are you properly eating? I’ve less opportunities to see you these days, so I’m worried. It’s harder to get out of there than you’d think, so just show your face and give us some relief.”

Hearing that, Lyle scratched his head.

(I made her worry. That really is a problem. I guess I’ll have to head over today.)

It was growing dark beyond the window. He had finished his work, and thought he’d be able to take it easy for now, but heading to the inner palace and seeing everyone’s face didn’t sound like a bad idea.

“Understood. I’ll head to the inner palace. You’re exactly right, Miranda.”

Miranda spoke with a smile.

“That’s good. Then I’ll prepare you a meal too, so take a bath at my mansion. While you’re doing that, I’ll call out to the others, okay?”

Lyle was delighted at Miranda’s mindfulness.

Now that the inner palace’s done, get right to child making! Telling him that just made

Lyle more timid, but now he felt a little embarrassed that he was being too mindful of it all.

(That's right. I just have to go with everyone's pace, and do my best in these sorts of things. First, just like back when we were adventurers, let's get used to sleeping in the same room.)

Feeling a sense of relief, Lyle smiled and nodded to Miranda.



A storehouse in the castle.

There, with a special wire wrapped around her many times over, Monica was surrounded by Valkyries. She was made to bite into a special gag, and she couldn't even cry out.

"Mhfff! Mhffffff!"

The Valkyries were all armed, looking down over her expressionlessly. To make sure she wouldn't run away, four of them had been put on surveillance.

"You traitor."

"Giving our master sexual education, just the two of you."

"How far did you go? Say it."

"That our master was driven so far to rely on this hunk of scrapmetal..."

They were all envious of, and worried for Lyle's sexual education from Monica. For that sake, they bridged the gap of factions, and offered their cooperation to Miranda.

Monica cried out in her heart.

(I-it's a trap! It's a trap, my dear chicken!! Run away! Run away at once! You have to get away!)

Her thoughts for her master were interrupted by a jamming magic tool nearby, and they wouldn't reach Lyle.

This was all thoroughly prepared.

Miranda was showing her serious face.

For that sake, Monica could only worry for the safety of Lyle's body.

Monica worried for Lyle...

(Damn it allll! If things went on like that, that damn chicken's virginity would be mine, all miiiine!!)

...No, she was smeared in lust, and whatever the case, Lyle was in a very dangerous situation.



Miranda's mansion.

Having taken a bath, in the middle of his meal Lyle looked around.

The newly built mansion was neat and tidy, the ornaments none too gaudy. But Lyle and Miranda were the only ones in the mansion.

There were Valkyries stationed outside, and Lyle was worried that they were a bit too numerous.

What's more.

(What is it, the food was real thick, or how should I put it...)

There were lines of things to build his stamina, and Lyle felt a silent pressure from Miranda. He thought he'd bring up some tale of the past, but there he noticed something else.

He looked around.

"Why isn't anyone coming?"

Miranda replied with a smile.

“Because I didn’t tell them.”

Lyle stopped eating, looking at Miranda’s face.

“Eh? But... rather, don’t you think the security’s too strict around here? This is the inner palace inside the castle, so you don’t have to station so many Valkyries.”

Miranda smiled.

“I mean, they’re there to make sure you don’t run away. It’s not like they’re guards.”

Lyle dropped the knife and fork in his hands onto the table.

“...What?”

Miranda stood, removed the clothes on her body, and extended a hand to Lyle. Lyle was coiled in the strings produced by her Skill.

“W-wait a second! Miranda? Miranda-san!?”

Miranda hoisted Lyle up and headed straight for her room. There was a large bed prepared in her room, and Miranda tossed Lyle straight onto it.

“You can call me whatever you want. You can even call me big sis. Even just, ‘you’ is acceptable. Now let’s do what we came here to do.”

Lyle wriggled, but Miranda’s strings were too sturdy for him to flee. It was a surprise attack. He never thought he’d be deceived so.

“W-wait!”

As Miranda reached a hand for his undergarments, she sent him a smile.

“Don’t worry. Just count the number of stains on the ceiling and it’ll be over.”

“Monica told me that’s what the man’s supposed to say! And wait, this place is newly built!!”

As Miranda hopped onto him, Lyle raised a scream.

“Noooooooo!!”

“A man shouldn’t cry like that. And even if you scream, no one’s going to come. My sound proofing measure are perfect.”

As if he’d been enraptured in the spider’s web that day, Lyle... lost his virginity, they say.

Sixth Generation Head (; ・`д・´): “L-LYYYYLLEE!! T-to think Miranda would use such forceful means.”

Milleia ◦ ◦ (◦ ^∀^ ◦) ◦ ◦ : “As expected of my great grandchild!”

Fifth Generation Head (◦ だ ◦): “I knew she’d do it. (Rather, the Sixth has a terrible eye for women. He does have a talent for drawing landmines to him).”

Intermission

The Start of Everything

Her brother's existence was in the way.

No matter what he was put up to, no matter what trouble he ran in to, her brother that would pull it all off with a smile... Lyle Walt was a hindrance.

The girl who thought that was just about to greet her seventh birthday. Her brother Lyle would become nine.

A brother two years older. An eyesore.

The Weihs territory. The city at its center was one of the prominent cities of the Bahnseim Monarchy. This was a territory the feudal lords of old had poured their lifeblood into completing.

Even the Walt House once called upstarts now boasted a history of two hundred and fifty years, alongside numerous achievements. They had climbed up all the way to be the most prominent nobles in Bahnseim.

The Walt House... Celes Walt was yet another of the influential noble Walt Line.

The Walt House mansion was busy to celebrate Lyle's birthday, but that as it was, it was wrapped in a merry air.

When Celes left her room, she would stick on a smile, and spend her days with it plastered on her face. So not to show what was inside. If she went against her brother, she knew she would simply be hammered down.

A difference in ability... even as siblings, there was more than a large wall, or two, or three between Lyle and Celes.

They both carried the same blood of Septem. They had both awakened to the depths of their blood. And yet her brother Lyle didn't seem to care about that at all.

As she looked out the window from her room, a wrinkle graced Celes's brow. She looked at the people working around the mansion.

"...How repulsive. Each and everyone one of them, it's disgusting."

Placing their expectations on her brother Lyle, and praising her brother Lyle. That was something Celes couldn't forgive.

But if she let it show on the outside, she didn't know what her parents would say. If they did find out, in order protect their heir Lyle, there was a possibility Celes would be sent off elsewhere. In the worst case, perhaps she would spend her life in confinement.

And that alone Celes wanted to avoid.

So she endured her hatred and spent every day all smiles and laughs.

While both of them carried the blood of Septem, as if split into yin and yang, Celes and Lyle were opposites.

And the more Lyle shined, the darker more did Celes' shadow become.

As she let off her rage in the confines of her room, she heard a knock at the door.

"Celes-sama, the master is calling for you."

Hearing the voice of a servant of the mansion, Celes let out a cute, lovable voice. Her expression was a ghastly one, but what left her mouth was lovable beyond measure.

"I'm coming~."

Before exiting the room, she changed her expression, and with a smile, she accompanied the servant to her father Maizel.

Seeing Celes' smile, the servant seemed joyful. He believed her false smile as the genuine article.

A truly delighted smile. Celes had no doubts that everyone saw it so.

(They really do all have knotholes for eyes. Well, I couldn't care less about that. More importantly, father. I'm sure it's about my birthday. I wonder what I should ask for.)

Her beloved parents. While she treated all other humans equally as trash, Celes didn't want to be hated by her parents alone. She had a strong desire to be loved.

That was also related to Septem's blood in her veins.



The mansion corridor.

Her talks with Maizel over, Celes walked down the path in good humor. Right now she was alone, but she was so delighted she might've broken into dance.

(Lots of specially-tailored dresses for me. He looked a little troubled, but if it's father, he'll definitely grant my wish.)

When asked what she wanted for her birthday, Celes had asked for a dress. Not just a dress. The footwear and accessories to match. She had asked for multiple full sets.

Maizel did look troubled, but it seems he did intend to grant the wishes of his adorable daughter. It was that very fact that made Celes more boisterous than any present ever could.

There, from the other side of the corridor, Lyle came walking.

Celes' feelings instantly took a turn to the absolute worst, but even so she stuck on her smile and gave Lyle her greetings.

(Well, I'm in a good mood today, so I guess I'll throw in a freebie. This one's troublesome if you get him angry.)

"Dear brother, are you making for father as well?"

There, Lyle smiled and nodded.

"Yeah, I was called for. I think it's about your birthday, but... what's this, it looks like

you really are happy today. You usually give me a much scarier smile, but this one definitely suits you a lot more.”

At that instant, a chill raced down her spine.

Lyle continued smiling as he continued on and passed her by. He did call out to her, but to the current Celes, it was as if she hadn’t heard anything at all.

“...That can’t be. It should have been perfect. My smile was perfect... That one... he noticed it all.”

Expressionless.

What assailed Celes was unease, jealousy, hatred, various things were pressed up against her all at once. Her everything had been seen right through.

As she thought that, Lyle became unbearably scary.

Yet at the same time that he looked upon her so lightly invited a tempestuous hatred.

(To me... you’ve made light of me, Lyle! You trash! Compost! I won’t forgive it. I definitely won’t forgive it!)

As she walked down the corridor in quick stride, Celes wanted to return to her room at once. In her room she’d cry out, and she had the urge to break something.

As she walked down the corridor with that on her mind, she found her mother Claire. Stopping in her tracks, Celes hurriedly killed down her feelings and made a smile.

(It’s perfect. My smile is perfect. I’ll definitely be fine.)

Growing increasingly anxious, she turned her smile to her mother. Claire gave a warm smile back.

“Celes, did you tell Maizel what you wanted?”

“Y-yes, mother. I asked for a few dresses.”

There, Claire touched a hand to her face.

“If it’s dresses, you already have some. And we’ve already properly prepared one for you, so you have to wear that one. But you’re a girl after all, Celes.”

Claire said it quite troubled, but she didn’t find fault in buying more dresses for Celes. Hearing that, Celes was relieved. To Celes, a reprimand from her parents was akin to despair.

“I-I’ve said something selfish.”

“It’s fine. You’re doing your best, Celes. By the way, have you seen Lyle around?”

She was praised. But right after came the name of Lyle.

Her mother was looking for Lyle.

“...He was headed for father.”

“I see. Thank you Celes. That child is growing up too, so I want to get this and that together for him. He’ll need a horse and weapon before he turns fifteen. That’s right! Celes, do you want to get a present for Lyle with me?”

“A present?”

“I’m either getting a horse or armor. Maizel said he wanted to hand over a sabre with his own hands, and he won’t listen to anyone on the matter. So I’ve decided on the horse or the armor. When that time comes, could you be with me?”

The Walt House had used a different weapon generation after generation. They were a group with strong characteristics. Perhaps it couldn’t be helped. But Lyle had chosen the same sabre as his father.

And that was something most joyous for Maizel.

Celes spoke to Claire with a smile. In truth she wanted to decline, but if she denied her parents’ beloved Lyle, she was scared she would be hated herself.

“Y-yes! I’ll be there.”

“That’s good. Ah, but you have to keep it a secret. With these sorts of things, I want it to be a surprise when I hand it over. But that boy is way too sharp. I’m worried whether I can surprise him or not. Celes, let’s go out together to buy Lyle’s present next time.”

With those words, Claire made for Maizel and Lyle. Celes saw her off with a smile, but when she was out of sight, she hung her head. There was no one around.

“...It’s my birthday... but they only ever talk about... I won’t forgive it. I definitely won’t forgive it. I want to take everything from him. It’s all... it’s all mine. I won’t give a single thing to him.”

Celes bit her lip.

But she heard a voice.

[Those are quite the muddled emotions. But not bad. Not bad at all... Celes.]

Celes glared around. The only ones in the mansion allowed to call her without any honorifics were her parents, or so she had decided internally.

Someone else calling her so was a deed she wouldn’t permit.

But there was no one around.

[Don’t be so angry. I’m your ally. The feelings you direct at your brother... I understand them. That’s right. In that case... I can even help you out if you want.]

“...Who? This isn’t very funny for a prank.”

[It’s no prank. Let me show you evidence. You remember your grandmother’s room? Right now it’s not being used. Go over there.]

Irritated as she was Celes headed for her grandmother Zenoire’s room. The voice came from a woman. Fascinating, but be that as it may, it was a voice she had never heard in the mansion before.

Perhaps it belonged to an assassin. But curiously enough, Celes feet made for the place the voice designated.

They were connected by something. Celes had noticed the connection.

And she entered the room. In that room that was cleaned at regular intervals, where the voice led her was under the floor. What's more, hidden under the bed.

Celes crawled under the bed, and groped around the floor as instructed to find one portion open up. There were various things inside.

[The other things don't matter. You see a box in there? Right, that one.]

It was what looked like a music box. It really was a music box. But perhaps it was broken, as it wouldn't make a sound.

"What about it?"

[Fufufu, there's actually a secret compartment to it. It has a trick to it. Try opening it as I tell you.]

Creeping out from under the bed, she brushed off the sweat with her hands, and tried following the voice's instruction to open the box. It was a complex mechanism and method. But the box itself did feel strangely heavy. It looked to be made of wood, but it was as if it had been strictly sealed off.

And once she had undone those complex contraptions, what she found was a yellow gem, a few centimeters across. The voice she heard was coming from there.

[It's a pleasure to meet you, Celes. I know you, but you do not know me. My name is Agrissa... You've at least heard of me before, haven't you?]

"...You jest."

Taking the Yellow Jewel in hand, Celes laughed a bit. But she felt power from the Jewel. The yellow radiance was like that of the finest gemstone, a charm that made it feel as if she was being sucked in.

[It's not a lie. Your grandmother was my descendent. She was also cute, but she was stubborn, you see. She wouldn't make any dealings with me. Originally, that box should have been entrusted to another to manage, but that Zenoire... at the end of the end, she said she couldn't trust you, and kept it hidden away. It was an object she couldn't

throw away so easily. It seems she was considerably worried... and at the end of it all, her life's flame went out.]

Celes listened to the story the Jewel told.

And when she heard of what the Jewel could do, she smiled wide.

She spoke.

"You're helping me, right? Then what's the price?"

[Oh, no wonder Zenoire was wary of you. You do resemble me in my youth. That's right... you have to entertain me. And if ever comes the time that you breathe your last breath, give your body to me. I want to revive.]

There, Celes' smile extinguished.

"...That's all? That's all I must give to take everything from Lyle? That's certainly shady. I was sure you'd tell me to give you my body at once."

Hearing that, Agrissa laughed.

[You're a firm one. There's a considerable amount of courage resting in you yet. I see, so to you, it's worth is but a trifle. But if you think of what my revival would mean, it would be a major problem for the continent.]

Celes scoffed.

"If that's the measly cost I must pay to get what I want, it's a cheap buy. Very well, if I die then do what you want. That's all it takes to obtain power that exceeds his... it's cheap as can be."

As Celes held the Jewel up high, it began to let off an amber light.

[Then let it be so. I will lend my power to you. First, let us awaken your Skill.]

...On that day, Celes laid hands on an immense power. This encounter would spread death and destruction through the continent.

This was also the start of a battle that enraptured the continent as a whole.

Claire (#° Д°): “No matter how you look at it, the war criminal here is my mother-in-law! Manage it more strictly! And wait, at least tell me something about it!”

Zenoire (#'∇ `): “Hey, I noticed Celes’ abnormality. The mother who overlooked it is the war criminal. Rather, I wouldn’t trust you if it was the death of me. To add to that, I hate you.”

Eighth Generation Head (; • `д • `): “F-father!? In these situations, who do I side with...”

Seventh Generation Head :(; ` ° 'ω ° `): “You fool! Don’t get any closer! We haven’t heard a thing. We haven’t seen a thing. And that is the truth!”

Intermission

The Last Day of the Empire

Monica burned the sight of the blazing capital into her eyes.

From the roof of the palace, she looked over the scene.

“Five hundred years... we held out five hundred years, Lyle-sama.”

Five hundred years. Monica who had watched the empire the whole time. She looked over the imperial capital. It had continued to expand, had become a metropolis that supported a population of three million, but now it was wrapped in a sea of flames, black smoke rising all around.

While the other Valkyries had applied changes to their bodies with the advancement of technologies, Monica alone, for these five hundred years... never set foot out of the capital.

And what she saw at the end was the sight of those carrying Lyle’s blood attacking the city. Among them she could confirm the forms of Valkyries.

“To think they’d invade us so far in want of the Jewel. Having memories burn away is a lonely sight, even for an automaton. Even when the records remain in my databases.”

The clock tower slowly tilted over before crumbling to bits. The fall of the bell at the top of the tower raised a terrible din.

Inside her hand, Monica was gripping the Jewel.

“...How unfortunate. There is no way I could accept anyone who would do such a thing as Lyle-sama’s successor. This Jewel shall remain under this Monica’s management.”

Jumping down from the roof, she ran through the noisy castle.

In the decayed empire, the generals who bought their status with money were

shouting at their men.

The officials were trying to run, and among them were even some trying to take the castle's valuable along with them.

Five hundred years. Monica had seen it all.

She had watched it all. She had always operated as one of the maids of the castle, and didn't even approach the inner palace.

The Valkyries distanced themselves from the inner palace as well.

Perhaps there was a conspirator in the castle, as the gate opened so easily. The ones on standby outside stampeded in, and raised a ruckus through the palace walls.

Perhaps they had strong ones among them, as the castle's knights didn't even serve to buy time. Even if there were those that could fight, they were singled out, surrounded, and cut down.

"They really did their research."

Monica ran through the chaotic structures, only to find some enemy knights standing before her.

"Maid over there! Stay where you are!"

"If you resist, I've no choice but to kill you!"

Two well-trained knight.

A fearless smile on her face, Monica grabbed and tossed them away. While the surrounding allied soldiers were surprised, they faithfully bowed their heads and ran off to fight another battle.

"They didn't lay hands on the innocent maid. They were good knights. So I didn't take their lives."

If they had cut at her without question, even if she didn't go as far as taking their lives, she'd at least have given them grave injury. Monica proceeded down the secret

corridors she'd grown accustomed to, heading to the throne room to find the panicked forms of the authorities.

And his imperial highness... Lyle's descendent was placed on the seat Lyle once sat. Placed was the proper term.

His eyes were vacant.

Despite the ruckus going on outside, he didn't show a reaction. But there was a prime minister nearby, and ignoring the emperor entirely, the minister shouted out orders. As Monica approached the throne, the prime minister noticed. He was a man who got his status with money and authority.

"W-why is a maid in such a place!? Stand back, you're committing a deed of disrespect!"

Monica narrowed her eyes.

"You're the ones being disrespectful. Good grief, it takes quite the mind to think of these means. Even if the emperor is but a single governing system, doing something like this..."

He was once a wise child. Monica had confirmed it from afar. But once he had a successor, he was incapacitated with drugs, and even fed poison.

From his half-open mouth, a small, 'aaah' came out as he tried to say something. This sort of thing had already carried on for a number of generations. It had continued for half a century. The surrounding authorities. And the prime minister and those that took care of him, had made the emperor into nothing more than an ornament.

For that sake, the shifts in generation during that half a century happened exceptionally quickly.

Monica smacked the palace guards away and came out in front of his imperial highness. And getting on her knees, she deeply lowered her head.

"My deepest apologies, your majesty... From the founding emperor Lyle, this Monica... but at least at the very end..."

Saying that, Monica kicked away the prime minister who had drawn his sword to approach. The minister who fell down the stairs broke some bones, but he seemed to be alive.

And Monica quietly cut at the neck of the current emperor. As the blood spouted out, she let it shower her body.

The empty-eyed emperor reached a hand for Monica. Monica gripped that hand tightly.

“Tha...”

With a face as if he had been released at the end, the emperor closed his eyes. Monica turned a glance to the secretly swapped out fake Blue Jewel before her own eyes.

There, the door to the audience chamber was broken down.

The form of four Valkyries led by the crown prince of Cartaffs.

“Your majesty. The crown prince of Cartaffs, Zerg, has come to save you. To punish the parasites nesting in the empire, and... woman, are you the one who killed him.”

Seeing the bloody form of the emperor Monica embraced, Zerg stopped his advance. The knights and soldiers that raced around the audience chamber.

But Zerg who watched Monica was perfectly calm. The ones who flew into a rage were the Valkyries around him.

“Monica... you betrayed!”

“Not only did you keep us away, even his majesty... as we surmised, you were broken after all!”

“We shall destroy you by our hands!”

Blue armor, and white wing binders. In the space of five hundred years, the Valkyries had grown in power. Against them, Monica alone was at a disadvantage.

“It would be troublesome if I was destroyed here.”

Monica sat the emperor down on the throne, took a tidy bow, and ran from the spot.

She was more knowledgeable of the castle than any Valkyrie. For it had been remodeled bit by bit.

With nothing to do, apart from her regular work, she'd either tamper with Porter or tamper with the palace... such was the life that Monica led.

As she ran, she headed for the inner palace at once. The alliance army that invaded the castle had already reached and laid hands on the women and children of the palace.

"Kill them! The legitimate bloodline rests in Faunbeux alone!"

"Eradicate the blood of the Walt House!"

"It's Zerg-sama's orders. Do it!"

No Valkyries stationed around, the knights and soldiers could do as they wished. Monica hurriedly made for the largest mansion, and saw the knight who had cut down the legal wife.

The woman who had tried to protect her young child collapsed, not a single guard around her.

"I'm sorry. Don't hate me kid."

As a representative knight tried to cut the child down, Monica took a gatling gun from her apron.

"As I thought, you had no intent to save him. Unfortunately, I will not let you take any more."

Once she had felled them all, Monica instantly embraced the young boy and headed for the secret passage that led out of the castle.

All those secret ways she made in times of old had proved useful.

Escaping the castle, a long way off from the capital, Monica had come to a point she could look over the city.

The young boy in her arms, she looked at the capital. The city was ablaze, and reconstruction would surely be extremely difficult.

“Even after all his heart’s blood he poured into it, it only took a few days for it to fall to ash. But as long as his blood lives...”

The child was too young to know what had gone on. But still he cried tears of sorrow. Monica soothed him as she opened her mouth.

“Lyle-sama, this Monica... has fulfilled her promise. So someday... once is enough. Just one more time, let me hear your voice.”

Monica gripped the Jewel in her hands. The real Jewel she had received from Lyle all those many years before,

Fifth Generation Head (; ° 𐄂 °): “...What’s this, that wasn’t heartwarming at all. What’s more, that was heavy. The hell... I can’t smile at that.”

Intermission

Erhart 1

Erhart was in Lorphys' royal palace.

The sun high in shy sky, the one across the small round table in the courtyard was a woman with long, violet hair, a certain Princess Annerinne.

(Don't screw with me. Don't screw with me! Why? Why did he push the damn princess onto me!? We aren't a match at all! It's true I asked him! I asked him if there was any way to resolve my harem problems! I did, but what's with this resolution!?)

Free Knight Erhart...

While an adventurer, he held the status of knight. He had been granted a number of privileges, and when on the move, he didn't have to pay any toll. On top of that, as a knight, he didn't have to listen to the orders of nobles.

If anyone could order him around, it would only be Lyle, who gave him the status in the first place. And if Erhart spotted injustice in any land, he was granted the authority to report it to the empire, and to deal with it on the spot.

A system quite fitting of Lyle, the adventurer turned emperor... that's what it meant to be a free knight, anyone would believe.

And in all truth, it was a system that directed some envy and irritation at Erhart. Lyle had wanted a reason to hold audiences with Erhart from time to time, so he had given him considerable authority.

Rather than any nobles of questionable standing, Erhart held many more rights and priveledges.

But even to Erhart, come a few years after the formation of the empire, a certain problem resurfaced. Women problems.

The women in his party had begun to reach the later years of marriageable age, and he had to choose just what he was going to do.

So Erhart had consulted with Lyle on the matter. No, to be more precise, Lyle had heard he was troubled, and called him over to the capital.

And after getting some alcohol into his system, he urged Erhart to speak. Using the reason that his friend had come to visit, Lyle who didn't have to return to the inner palace that day was terribly lively.

As he observed that, Erhart spoke of his troubles with marriage.

Thinking of his party members was the job of the party's leader Erhart. It was also his own problem, so he turned to Lyle without expecting anything great.

An influential adventurer from everyone's eyes.

With outstanding ability, and surrounded by beautiful women. There were many who envied him. From the point of view of the one in question, he wanted to cast away his problem-ridden Free Knight status.

As a Free Knight, all the troublesome requests were pushed onto him. What's more, in all the villages and towns he stopped by, they would recommend him to take their daughters as wives by all means.

He had to fortify his own standing, he thought...

"You're a strong one, aren't you? I heard you took down a Land Dragon with ease."

...The joyful woman Annerinne was a royal princess. The country called Lorphys still faced a pressing matter that there was no one to represent the state.

One of the larger reasons lay in that Annerinne had refused to take the throne. While she had been enthusiastic about Lyle a little while back, at this point, rather than Lyle who was busy with governmental work, Erhart's rumors were the ones spreading far and wide and garnering her interests.

Erhart spoke.

“No, that is because of my comrades. As long as everyone fulfills their own role, we’ll be able to win against whatever comes before us. It wasn’t by my power alone.”

Erhart sipped his tea with a cool look on his face, but his insides were filled with impatience.

(No matter how you think of it, our statuses are in different fields! What’s more, that bastard Lyle... he’s pushing his troubles onto me again! I never should have consulted with him! Goddessdammit!)

Erhart lamented his own lack of judgement, but he was before a princess. What’s more, Lorphys was a member of the four-nation alliance that had supported Lyle from its early days. While there was a problem that she continued to stay in her princess status forever, her status was worlds apart from Erhart’s.

“Your modesty is also wonderful. The way you carry yourself... I think it’s simply marvelous.”

The way he carried himself... no matter how friendly he was with Emperor Lyle, he still had to drill etiquette into his body for public places, or so Baldoir had said and taught him.

“You think too highly of me. Even I know how unsightly I...”

There, in the space they enjoyed their tea, a single man barged in.

“Pardon my intrusion! Annerinne-sama, it’s been a while.”

He was the prince of a small nation. A country once about as small as Lorphys, but as he was a second son, the prince had wished to be married off.

“Your highness.”

Annerinne’s expression clouded. As Lyle had avoided a marriage with Annerinne, he was a man with whom diplomatic talks had proceeded. Of course, they were just assertively trying to build a market for themselves, and that didn’t change the fact that Lorphys had its aim set on a big-shot like Lyle.

The prince looked at Erhart and scoffed.

“Hmm, with the status of a mere adventurer, you approach the princess... don’t get stuck up just because you’re the emperor’s friend.”

Don’t lay a hand on Annerinne, or so the prince’s behavior seemed to say. Erhart thought.

(This guy... could it be he like princess Annerinne? Huh? Then isn’t this my big chance!?)

Wanting to hand off this ticking time bomb of a woman at once, Erhart stood from his seat.

“It does seem there has been a blunder on my part. Then I shall take my leave. I beg your pardon.”

As he clenched his fist inside, the prince spoke to him.

“It seems you do know your place. Make sure to keep quiet henceforth.”

His high-and-mighty attitude irritated Erhart.

But when he thought of how he could push Annerinne onto him with this, it even made him want to break into a skip. It’s not as if there was any problem with her appearance.

She simply had a strong tendency to dream. Erhart didn’t quite want that sort. What’s more, their statuses were too far apart, and their sense of values too far off.

(Well, this should be fine.)

He thought as he left the stage. He decided he would go off and complain to Lyle.



The imperial capital.

As Erhart was called out, he went to complain to Lyle.

“Bastard! You tried to push a bomb of a woman onto me!”

Lyle was in his office, letting a small girl sit on his lap.

“Dude, why is your timing so off? What’s more, it had to be today, in this timeslot... I guess men who’ve got it really are different.”

The once-pure Lyle was nowhere to be found. What was there was the form of a tired father playing with his two-year-old daughter on the office’s sofa.

Seeing the child, Erhart restrained himself a bit as he spoke.

“Well, I did manage to avoid it. Anyways, you told me there was a marriage interview in Lorphys, so there I went, and the one who came out was the royal princess! Of course I’d be surprised!”

Perhaps tired, Lyle held the hands of his daughter as he tried to keep her entertained.

“That sounds nice. Well, she just told me to let her meet the man she got interested in lately, and she never told me to let her marry him, so it doesn’t really matter to me.”

Irritated at Lyle’s lack of surprise, Erhart turned a glance to the little girl on his lap.

“By the way, why is there a small child here? And wait, who’s child is it?”

Lyle looked at Erhart with a straight face.

“...My child.”

“I know that! I’m asking who the mother is! Rather, I get the feeling I’ve seen her somewhere before...”

There, the small girl spoke to Erhart in fumbly words.

“Mewienn. Mwy mommy’s name is Mewieeeeenn. Hmm?”

Lyle averted his eyes from Erhart, covered up his daughter’s eyes, and held her tight. Erhart collapsed at the knees.

“I-I see... it’s natural for Marianne-san to have a child. Right... natural... I-I’m glad she... looks happy... UWAAAAAAH!!”

Seeing the daughter of his first love, a complicated feeling filled his soul. He stood and ran straight out of the office.

Lyle saw off his back as he let out a sigh.

“Why did he have to come at that pinpoint time? Ah, look, she’s come to get you.”

A Valkyrie had come for the girl.

“Princess! Now, return with this Unit Ninety Nine! When I noticed you had disappeared, I thought my heart would stop. Not that I have a heart.”

From how she joked around, it seems she still had some leisure. As his daughter left him, she took the Valkyrie’s hand and left the office.

She had sneaked out of the inner palace and come to Lyle’s place. To Erhart, it was the worst possible time.

In that office that everyone had left, Lyle looked up at the ceiling.

“Now then, what shall I do... Erhart, this isn’t as simple a problem as you think. Do you think he’s noticed yet?”

As he had arbitrarily barged into the office and left on his own, Lyle had been unable to tell him something important. But Lyle soon stood and stretched out his arms.

“Well, so be it. It’ll work out one way or another.”

Sixth Generation Head (﹂ ´ω`): “Lyle’s drifting further and further away. I guess this is fate. Harems really should be kept to dreams. I can see his heart withering away.”

Fifth Generation Head (° ㄥ °): “I get you’re trying to look cool, but yours was your own fault. Lyle’s, well... I guess we hold responsibility for around half of it? But in your case you were completely to blame. Choosing nothing but landmine women!”

Sixth Generation Head’s Wives:

(° 言°): “Father-in-law, did you say something about us?”

(° 言°): “I never even dreamed my husband was thinking of making a harem. You should praise the fact that I didn’t erase the other two from existence.”

(° 言°): “Keep your convenient dreams for when you’re asleep. Now come and face reality, Fiennes.”

Sixth Generation Head (` ; ω ; ’): “Goddessdammit! Everone else’s evaluations rose at the end, but I’m just left aside... someone save me!!”

Intermission

Life in Beim

A little while after Lyle's party had arrived in Beim.

As he returned from finishing a request, Lyle opened up his memo pad. Written on the paper were his comrades' names and dates. And what he had done with them to that point.

Looking over it all, Lyle gave a satisfied nod.

"That should be enough. I think I can take it easy for the rest of the month."

Written in were his activities with his party from Novem to May. Whether he gave a present or had a date, or a pleasant conversation... it was all scrawled in great detail and properly managed.

But the Fifth, who spoke less than any of the other ancestors, wrung out his voice.

[You idiot! Shannon's extremely low, isn't she!]

Lyle hurriedly checked his memos, and sure enough, his time spend with Shannon was low. But Lyle felt relieved.

"Oh, Shannon, is it? That's alright. Because I'm quite sure that girl hates me."

There, the Sixth let out a satisfied voice.

[That's right. Well, she's just tagging along with Miranda, so you're not in that sort of relationship yet. Fifth, let's just take it easy and...]

But a frantic Fifth superseded that opinion.

[You keep quiet, fool~! Just how many failures has that train of thought led you to... I followed through so many times for you! And if you'll let me have my say... you're all

naïve! Listen here, none of you feel a sense of crisis!]

Cutting it there, the Fifth gasped for breath before explaining to Lyle.

[Listen well, those arbitrary thoughts like, 'that should be enough', and, 'yeah, that looks good', don't get through to women! Just how much careful caution did I take around the Sixth's wives... this man draws nothing but landmine women to him.]

The Third raised a perplexed voice.

[Huh? But you know, all his wives passed the precepts, didn't they?]

The one to answer that question was the Seventh. A hint of grief lingered in the Seventh's voice.

[Yes, without a doubt, each one of them was talented on their own. If of the three, only one had married into the Walt House, I'm sure we wouldn't have any problems at all. It's because he took all three that we went through hell.]

The Sixth refuted the surrounding opinions.

[...Even I thought two was no good. But you see, if you have two, it becomes a competition and that's nothing but trouble, so I went and got a third...]

I offered my frank response to his resolution.

"Are you sure you didn't pour oil on the fire?"

The Fifth seemed irritated.

[And because of that, I went through my troubles. Because I paid too much mind for my son's wives, I had to follow through for my own wives as well, and... anyways! Listen well, Lyle. Negligence alone should be avoided at all costs. Throw away all your assumptions! The ones surrounding you aren't some weak damsels in distress. Imagine yourself surrounded by ravenous tigers and bears!]

Isn't that going a bit too far?

Or so the other members thought, but when you thought over it, every gathered had a

peculiarity or two. While they wouldn't call them wild animals, they were definitely danger.

And Shannon held demon eyes that required special attention.

"Okay, understood. I'll go out with Shannon. I'm sure she'll be happy if we go see the food stalls and minstrels."

As Lyle tried to play it safe, the Fifth yelled at him.

[Where do you think those simplistic thoughts will lead you!? You need some more careful caution or else...]

There, a knock came at the door. Not a worker of the inn, Lyle confirmed with his Skills that it was Monica before calling out a, 'come in'.

As Monica entered, she saw that Lyle was preparing to leave.

"Oh, are you going out? I thought I'd hear out if you have any requests for lunch, but if that's the case, are you eating out? Anyways, where will you be going? If you need a baggage carrier, please use this Monica as you will."

Her appearance was that of a beautiful girl, but inside she was an automaton who could exhibit physical strength exceeding that of adults. She was convenient for carrying things, but as she looked like a woman, if Lyle actually used her to carry things, the surrounding eyes would grow cold.

Lyle continued his preparations.

"Yeah, I'm eating lunch out. I'm going out with Shannon, so could you stay at the inn?"

Monica took his words in terror.

"W-what's this? You mean to say you won't be going out with me!?"

Lyle smiled.

"That's right. Good luck innsitting."

As he left the room, Monica crouched and cowered and saw Lyle off.

“H-have a good day. Goddammit!! Chicken dickwad, you damn fool!”



After calling out to Shannon, Lyle went out to the town of Beim.

He headed to where the performers performed, and of them brought his feet to where the singers sang their songs. But Shannon was in a bad move.

While they walked with linked hands, Lyle looked at Shannon and spoke.

“What’s wrong? You like songs, don’t you?”

Shannon was walking mindful of her chest, and she offered Lyle a complaint.

“Oh shut it. I’ve already been here recently, so I’ve already heard all the songs and tales they have to tell. Won’t you take me somewhere else!?”

(...T-this girl... ever since I took her out, she’s done nothing but complain.)

Irritated as he was, he understood it would be no fun to hear tales one’d heard before, and made for somewhere else.

“Do you go out often?”

Shannon brushed her hair aside as she answered Lyle’s question.

“I’ve got my sister, right? And Eva goes out a lot, so I sometimes tag along. Though Aria just goes around the food stalls.”

“Oh, so you get along well with Eva?”

Novem and Miranda, the two were at odds, so factions were forming among the harem members. Because of that, hearing of Shannon of Miranda’s faction going out with Eva was joyous news to Lyle.

“Novem told me to go out with someone. But our conversations don’t really mesh, and

there's everything that's happening with my sister, so it's like she wants to keep some distance too, perhaps?"

Hearing that, Lyle made a stiff smile.

"I-I see."

(I wonder why they can't get along.)

A factional war was being formed around Novem and Miranda. If possible, Lyle wanted to somehow have Shannon help both sides make up.

It seemed that a troupe that had arrived in Beim quite recently had begun singing the songs they gathered on their travels, so Lyle and Shannon headed there to listen in.

It was a troupe of elves, and while they were small in scale, they had an energy to them.

"The next song up is a song of the Hero of the distant land of Cartaffs! If anyone holds interest in such a tale, by all means plant your feet and listen in!"

As the male elf said that, it seems those around held no interest in Cartaffs, as the customers began to disperse. While some remained, the topic was surely not a popular one.

But without changing their expressions, the elves burst into song.

The song of Cartaff's hero who once performed in an old war with Bahnseim.

The tale of the brave knight who fought to protect a young noble girl.

But at the end, the girl married a blood-relative of the lord she served under, and the knight watched the night sky alone.

It was a song without a happy ending.

(That was a bit questionable. Perhaps the customers left because they knew the ending?)

Lyle thought as he listened to the verses. But Shannon was gripping his hand tight, listening in all earnesty, and he didn't want to put a damper on her mood, so he kept

quiet. Bringing his gripped hand closer to her face, Shannon looked on in pure seriousness.

There, the Fourth seemed fed up as he offered advice to Lyle.

[Lyle, look at Shannon's chest. Can you see the present you bought for her in Centrale? When this is over, praise her for it.]

The Third spoke to the Fourth.

[What, you said it already? You should've just waited until he noticed.]

The Fourth sighed as he spoke back.

[Lyle's growth aside, I felt bad for Shannon.]

Hearing that, he noticed Shannon had the pendent he'd bought in Bahnseim's capital of Centrale hung at her chest. It was something cheap, but she was looking after it quite carefully.

Once the song was over, and the applause broke out, Shannon gave a large clap of her hands. The customers tossed their coins forward. Lyle looked at Shannon's delight, and produced a silver coin from his coin purse.

It seems she was quite pleased with that one.

"It's a new songs! A nice one, I like it quite a bit."

For Shannon's delight, Lyle gave a warm smile as he placed the coin into the container an elf had brought forward. There, the elves frantically gave tidy bows.

Getting a large copper was for the fortunate. Looking at the stopped feet, the song hadn't been popular.

But Lyle threw a silver coin in.

(Well, looks like Shannon's happy, so I guess it's fine.)

"We'll come again."

“Bye-bye!”

Leading Shannon by the hand, he left the area.

Once there were fewer people around, Lyle looked at Shannon.

“So you actually wore that necklace.”

There- a little surprised- Shannon spoke bashfully.

“O-of course I did. Aren’t you a little slow to notice?”

The two of them laughed as they walked off to find some place to eat. The Fifth seemed truly relieved.

[Now look at that. Look at that!... She’s already taken to him. That was dangerous. If we left her aside any longer, that would definitely have been dangerous!]

Perhaps the Fifth was drawing closer to the Sixth as the Sixth broke into hurried words.

[Y-you’re right. It was my mistake, so you don’t have to criticize me so.]

It seems the Fifth was harassing the Sixth in unexpected ways.

Fifth Generation Head (; ‘ㄥ `): “Following through for my son’s three wives was one of my greatest troubles.”

Sixth Generation’s Wives (° 言°): “You say something, father-in-law? More importantly... where could Fiennes be? And could you hear out our complaints?”

Sixth Generation Head (; ・ `ω ・ `): “I’m soooooorry!! Ah, by the way, they decided to do a second print run on Sevens Volume 1. Please forgive me by that grace!”

Fifth Generation Head (`ω `): “Hahaha... I’m definitely never forgiving you. Never.

And today once more, my animals are my only solace.”

Fifth Generation Wives (〇 言 〇): “Our husband’s going to be taken by our son’s wives again... we definitely can’t forgive this. This is why we hate wives.”

Intermission

Lord of the Imperial Library

Clara Bulmer.

While being one of Lyle's mistresses, she was found in the imperial capital's library much more often than in the inner palace mansion prepared for her.

The reason being that she was zealously recording all the events that led up to the founding of the empire.

A large portion of her enthusiasm came from Eva, who prioritized the dramatic aspects of stories in her songs. The way things were going, Eva's fabrications would be recognized as truth, and there was a possibility much of their lives would be written off as lies in the world to come.

So Clara decided to leave records.

Taking a book she couldn't reach without a ladder in hand, Clara flipped through the pages. In her separate room in the imperial library, the books of Arumsaas once designated as forbidden had been carried.

They were mainly documents of the past the Bahnseim monarchy had sealed off.

There were also things written of the Bahnseim House putting them far from any heroes.

According to the records of the time, they held a territory quite close to Centralle, and were under Agrissa's rule for a majority of it. When that standing became disadvantageous, they changed sides, and in the end, they killed Lyle's ancestor to snatch away all the achievements.

Perhaps they had frantically tried to erase the facts, as there were traces that many documents were disposed of. At the time, in order to keep the documents safe, Arumsaas had hidden them in a place inaccessible to the public.

Once the Bahnseim royal line was born, the reason so many countries arose throughout the continent was largely due to their lack of trust towards the House.

“If only there were more records.”

Lifting up her staff imbued with light, she continued climbing the ladder as she read through the books on her way when a voice called down from below.

“Mom, are you still up there? You should return to the inner palace sometime. Dad is worried for you.”

Since the boy who called her mom had arrived, she held her books under an arm and climbed down the ladder. Seeing her unsteady descent as she still held a grip on her staff, the young boy worried whether she would fall to the bottom.

That boy with deep-blue hair was Clara’s son.

While there was a single Valkyrie Unit beside him, the Valkyrie seemed bored.

“Why do you have to carry your staff? It’s dangerous so I told you to stop, didn’t I?”

Once Clara reached the floor, she brought her books to the desk and left them there. She leaned her staff against them as well.

The Valkyrie looked around and arbitrarily began getting things in order.

“Ah, leave those books where they are!”

Clara reached out her hand as she said it, and the young boy grasped her hand. Before she had even realized it, the young boy had grown bigger than her own petite form.

“Get a grip! It’s because you never come home that I had to come and get you. The librarians were so worried they raised a report to the castle.”

Clara- who’d settled into the library- was living a life much more comfortable than she had in Arumsaas. Not only surrounded by books, as long as she stayed here, even food was brought straight to her.

“I’m properly eating.”

“That’s because the librarians are being mindful of you. There’s no way anyone can speak out against one of the emperor’s mistresses.”

To her son’s opinion, Clara tilted her head.

“That’s not true. I get plenty of complaints.”

“Those people are an exception. A special exception. Just give up and return to the inner palace. Did you know... on the street, they’re calling you the Lord of the Library.”

“Thank you?”

As Clara acted bashfully, her son grew irritated, and began adding various gestures to his speech.

“Everyone knows you’re here, mother! That’s why we have to assign valuable Valkyries to this place!”

Over a hundred Valkyries. But to speak to the contrary, with the entire continent in his hands, those were all the Valkyries he had.

The Valkyrie cleaning the area was Clara’s son’s exclusive Valkyrie. There was a single Valkyrie stationed in each of the mansion, meaning the inner palace alone took up twenty five of them.

They were a valuable asset, but saying that wasn’t enough, another twenty five were stationed around the palace.

In that case, the number that could move outside were strictly limited.

Clara looked at her son and let out a sigh.

“This is quite a difficult problem. When I rise in status, I can no longer do what I want. Come to think of it, have you decided what you want to do? If you want to go independent, even if you try to marry in somewhere, I don’t have any connections, so it will be hard.”

Her son was more level-headed than her.

“Please get a grip on yourself, mom! You’re in Ludmilla-sama’s faction. Talks for my marriage are already proceeding on that side. It’s precisely for that talk that I came to drag you back today!”

Clara recalled the inner palace’s factional struggles she had forgotten for quite some time, and hit her hands together.

“That’s right. Come to think of it, Ludmilla-san lost in her war with Miranda-san and has been quiet for a while, has she?”

Seeing his mother so distant from the events of the inner palace, the young boy held his head. But some part of him seemed to have given up and accepted that his mother was best like this.

“Well, Miranda-san really turned the tables there. No one could have thought she would do something so underhanded...”

Clara remembered the feud in the inner palace back then, folding her arms, and giving a few firm nods.

“As expected of the Circry sisters. That was some splendid coordination. I went and evacuated to the library, though. Lyle-s... his majesty seemed quite worn out after that one. But in order to save face for his majesty, didn’t both side call it a draw?”

The boy confirmed that the Valkyrie had finished cleaning up the room before speaking to Clara.

“You should think of how worried dad is. Rather, at the point Novem-sama jumped in along the way, and brought the matter to a forced termination, it was Miranda-sama’s victory. Mom... even if you’re waiting and watching, just go to the inner palace.”

The boy wanted her to remain neutral like Aria and Vera.

Clara thought a bit, and looked to her desk.

“It will be impossible for a while. I still have work I have to do. I have to leave enough data for the world to come.”

The boy wearily looked over Clara's documents.

"Well, it's a good thing to have a hobby, and dad said so too, so I won't say anything against it. But spend at least the minimum amount of time in the palace!"

The Valkyrie picked Clara up under her arm, and everyone together, the boy left the library.



Night.

In the inner palace, Lyle had dropped by the mansion of Clara, who had returned for the first in quite some time.

"Eh? What's this? You came because your son scolded you? You and Shannon never change, do you. Her son over there's a reliable one too."

Lyle laughed to himself.

As he didn't have to spend the night in the carnivores' nests today, he welcomed the night with quite a refreshing feeling.

Clara felt somewhat offended.

"Comparing me to Shannon-san is a bit..."

The most hopeless mistress of the inner palace... Shannon.

Her kids were all reliable, to such an extent that Miranda took pity on them, and often looked after them.

For some reason, Shannon's children were exceedingly proficient.

And that only made Shannon's hopelessness stand out more.

The boy eating alongside them spoke to Lyle.

“Dad, about my engagement...”

Lyle spoke to his son with a serious look on his face.

“Do you think you’ve played around enough? Once you marry, you won’t be able to have much fun anymore. Why not stay here a little longer and have your share of fun? See, if you marry into another house, your shoulders will feel cramped. Even when I’m an emperor, my shoulders feel cramped.”

Lyle’s children didn’t generally leave the inner palace in their younger years. Being taken out to play, and being scolded alone were done on a consistent basis.

But the boy spoke.

“No, I think I’ll obey Ludmilla-sama. Rather, not doing anything for her at all makes me feel bad for her.”

On her son’s reaction, Clara lamented when she chose to join the faction all those years ago. But back then, it was something she did to keep the balance.

She didn’t think that decision was mistaken, and in truth, there was a time when Ludmilla sought after Novem’s position, and caused quite a stir in the inner palace.

Clara pretended to wait and watch as she purposefully leaked information, and like that she had maintained the peace of the palace. Meaning she had singlehandedly maintained Lyle’s peace.

Lyle was surprised.

“...Wow, when you’re my son, you’re way too reliable. I should’ve taken you out more often. The more hopeless a child is, the more you can dote on them, see.”

As he declared he’d take him out and render him hopeless with fun, Monica appeared from under the floorboards and raised her hand.

“Please leave that role to me...”

Hit on the head with a giant hammer from a Valkyrie, Monica was repelled. Lyle restarted his meal.

“...Well, it’s that. I’ll tell Ludmilla to have some consideration in your treatment.”

The boy offered Lyle his thanks.

“I’ll be fine. We get along quite well, and Ludmilla-sama said she wouldn’t let anything bad happen to me.”

Seeing her son even had connections with Ludmilla, Clara mused over how big the boy had grown.

(I’m definitely a failure as a mother.)

And she looked at Lyle.

“R-really? Well, if I don’t have to go over there, then that’s all the easier for me...”

If he went to Ludmilla, Miranda would be angry. If he went to Miranda, Ludmilla would be angry. Lyle didn’t get involved with the feuds of the inner palace.

On the surface and underneath, the intense wars that waged on... any poor involvement and they’d all blow sky high.

Her son spoke to Clara.

“Mom, making documents is important, but you have to make sure you don’t ruin your body.”

Clara cleared her throat.

“I-I’ll be fine!”

Clara was put on the side being worried for. And seeing that, Lyle gave a smile.

Intermission

A Day in the Life of Vera

The one whose sigh intermingled with her stroll through the inner palace was a certain Vera Trēs.

A bright red dress, and her hair done up on both sides. In the town prepared within the castle... she walked through the inner palace, but it truly felt as if she walked through a small town.

There were small children walking along the paths before her eyes.

In their hands they held books and writing implements, and they were likely off to study in a different mansion. Rather, the only kids on the block who did that were Shannon's children.

Generally, there was a time period where everyone got together and studied. But if that was insufficient, they'd either call a tutor to the mansion, or go to the castle for some extra study time.

That being the case, at Shannon's place, since she never got a proper education herself, their learning was completely left up to Miranda.

Three young children.

As they walked on, a Valkyrie stood to block their way, a toy in her hands.

"Everyone, you could at least play with us today. We are eternally devoting ourselves to the development and recreation of toys, and we can say you shall enjoy them with certainty..."

The Valkyrie recommended toys to the children who were going off to study, but all three kids shook their heads.

The smallest one, a young girl with golden eyes, spoke to the Valkyrie.

“Unit Ninety Two, we’re going off to study at auntie’s mansion, so we can’t play with you. We’ll play once we get back, so until then, could you look after mom for us?”

With those words coming from such a young child, Unit Ninety Two collapsed at the knees. The toy fell to the ground, but she didn’t even try to retrieve it.

Vera was impressed at how focused, those still-small children had grown to be.

(Are they really Shannon’s kids?)

One of the kids retrieved the toy, and after handing it to Unit Ninety Two, the group took their leave.

Ninety Two burst into tears.

“This cannot beeeee! This has to be a liiiiiiiiiiiii! I mean, there is no way the hybrid chicks of our master and that hopeless Shannon could be so upstanding! They should have taken some of the more useless parts, and not want to study, and just want to spend their days in ease... then we come in and say, ‘oh there’s no helping you cute little things,’ and play with them... what happened to my dreeeeaaaammm!!?”

Before the breaking down Unit Ninety Two, Vera stood fed-up.

Valkyrie Unit Eleven- who stood to her side- scoffed. In her hands, she held the baby that was Vera’s child.

“Hah, how unsightly. When you boasted of having the largest faction of them all, this is where you end up? I’ll show you how useless I can raise the chick at our place.”

When the Valkyrie said that to the child with a smile on her face, Vera felt true fear.

“You’re saying that as a joke, aren’t you?”

Eleven tilted her head.

“Eh? I’m quite serious. We plan to make out of them existences who would not be able to live on without us. Do not worry. With regular maintenance and overhauls, we brag that we can operate for several tens of thousands of years.”

In a sense, the Valkyries were scary existences.

“Should I tell you you’re wasting your abilities? Or should I rejoice you’re pouring your efforts towards us... rather, what were the ancients thinking when they made you, I have to wonder.”

In front of Ninety Two’s eyes, Eleven lulled the baby as if to show off.

Unit Ninety Two looked on it with envy.

They were quite a handful when they were babies. And the Valkyries couldn’t get enough of that, apparently.

“Ufufu, your big brother chick grew up to be a splendid human being, but as long as this Unit Eleven is here, I shall show you just how hopelessly we can raise you.”

For any servant who said that, a normal master would drive them out at once. But this was the inner palace, and the Valkyries were overly proficient as maids.

Driving them out was impossible, and there was no intent to do so.

For these Valkyries... as long as they were Lyle’s children, the automatons would protect them unconditionally. They treated them as targets to guard, so no assassinations ever took place within the factional wars.

More than that, if anyone tried, the information would leak, and the mother would be the one cornered.

That they put a fixed brake on the factional disputes was something everyone was well aware of.

They had no choice but to rely on them.

As Vera took her walk, she looked up at the sky.

Unit Eleven looked at her. Gently poking the baby’s face, she seemed to be in bliss.

“Oh? What seems to be the matter?”

Vera spoke.

“Father, you see. He said he wanted my second child to take over the Trēs House. He’s using this hand and that to get me to approve of it, and it’s getting to be a right up nuisance.”

As Fidel frequently commuted to the capital over the cuteness of his grandchildren, he was trying his best to get them out of the inner palace.

Unit Eleven laughed.

“That is not happening. The Trēs House’s heir was already decided to be the child of your sister Gina-san. If you wish, you could leave this matter to us. We cannot bear to have a chick snatched away, so we could find a truth or two he would not want found out and threaten him to obedience...”

When Eleven started into something scary, Vera cried out.

“Of course that’s no good! Ah, goddess! I’m going to bring this matter up with Lyle, so none of you lay a hand on it.”

Unit Eleven seemed quite disappointed.



Night.

Having dropped by Vera’s mansion, Lyle looked at the baby in Monica’s embrace.

Monica’s right hand was properly cradling the baby. Her left was grasping Unit Eleven’s head and pushing it down.

“G-give her back! That child is my chick!”

Monica made a triumphant smile.

“How unfortunate. As the Chicken Dickwad’s exclusive maid, I can brag that the care of all his chicks fall under my jurisdiction. You degraded defects and mass produced

lot can just stand down.”

Irk! Said Eleven as she played around with Monica. Lyle watched over it absentmindedly. A look at his figure, and it seemed that he was thinking over something.

Vera looked at Lyle.

“Hey, were you listening? My father is genuinely trying to gain custody of his grandchildren, you know?”

Lyle seemed taken aback.

“Eh? Oh, I see. That’s right. Those grandchildren are quite cute, don’t you think?”

Seeing Lyle hang his head, Vera shrugged her shoulders. There, Monica burst into joy.

“Oh my, it seems the chick is asleep. This Monica shall sing a lullaby. To sleep to my beautiful voice, you’re quite the lucky one. The only one beside the Chicken Dickwad allowed to listen to it are his chicks.”

As Monica headed to the depths of the room, Unit Eleven gave chase.

“You get out of here already!”

Once the two automatons were gone, Vera placed a hand on Lyle’s shoulder. Lyle raised his face.

“Hey, this really isn’t a good environment for them, is it?”

Vera laughed a bit.

“The Valkyries? But they’re convenient. Since we have them, we never have to see blood in the faction wars. The children alone will always be safe.”

But Lyle saw that as unnatural.

“You don’t want them around?”

“That’s not it. They seem to be having their fun, and personally, I think they’re a big help. But you see, their time is quite different from ours.”

Vera spoke.

“They said they could remain operational a thousand, even ten thousand years. Isn’t that secure?”

Lyle’s eyes were serious, and Vera could understand that wasn’t what he wanted.

“If they got serious, I’m sure this empire could last thousands of years, maybe more. But you see, do you think that’s the right thing? These days, it’s been on my mind a lot.”

Lyle’s sense of values was something he formed on his travels with advice from his ancestors. To Lyle, an ever eternal empire felt unnatural and unneeded.

Vera agreed.

“You may have a point. But if you take the children from the Valkyries now, won’t they get angry? And the faction wars will intensify.”

They were only remaining peaceful because there was no worry of harm to their children, and if the possibility came out, there were many of the women there who would become demons.

In truth, if Vera saw her own child might be in harm, she’d do all in her power to protect them.

Lyle held his head.

“That’s what I’m talking about. Why do they have to fight so much? I said it to Novem and Miranda as well. When I did, they laugh and say, ‘the other one started it’. Now that’s strange, isn’t it? Ludmilla looks like the sort who’d really do it. Why do they have to be so bloodthirsty? I’d really like some slack here. I want to at least take it easy as I sleep. Learn a bit from Shannon. That one actually worries me because she never comes out of her mansion. Those two should learn to enjoy the great indoors.”

As Lyle spilled his complaints, Vera embraced him and consoled him.

Fourth Generation Head (@д@): “Even when Vera-chan’s so kind, her nickname in the comment section was, ‘Wallet-san’, popular as she was.”

Monica (° ∇ °)o ∷°: “And I was popular too!... And! Sevens Volume 2 is coming out on April 30th! Though I’m not appearing yet!”

Miranda (° д °): “...”

Miranda (° д °): “Who the hell is Sophia?”

(TL: The Fourth is referring to the author’s comment section on Syosetsu. Sophia is a LN only character.)

Intermission

The Illustrated Diary

“Professor, we’ve found it!”

“Good work!”

An ancient ruin.

Finding records of a fallen large nation once called the empire, the two men jumped for joy as they rolled the paper out.

“Amazing. Even when thousands of years have gone by, it’s still legible.”

“Yeah, despite this and that, the advancement of technology in the imperial era was plain abnormal. The other documents make it clear as well. Just look at this, a simple age analysis shows this is from the early imperial era.”

As the professor judged its age with a smartphone-like device, his expression turned to joy.

His assistant also seemed emotionally moved.

“They all said everything had been carried off, but there was still some left after all.”

In that dusty space, they had been searching wildly for records, and now a heavy coat of dust lingered in the air.

From where the light could flow in, they could see it come in fine threads.

“To think it would be under the collapsed bookshelf... now then, first we have to record it.”

Photographing it with his smartphone, they let the device carry out a simple analysis while the two men prepared a light nearby.

Treating it with the utmost care, the two men tried to confirm just what sort of thing they had found.

The assistant's hands shook.

"A-an illustrated diary? Professor, this is an illustrated diary entry! Meaning this must be..."

"D-do-dooooon't panic!"

Even if that white-haired professor sporting a splendid beard broke into a panic, it wasn't cute in the slightest.

That on his mind, the assistant verified the documents in his hands.

An ancient diary.

It would definitely hold high historical value, but when it came to illustrated diaries from the imperial area... the author would be the main point of focus. If this really was an item painted by that famous woman, then alongside immense historic value, it would gain an additional artistic value.

"F-first the analysis. It's in quite terrible condition, after all."

Once they took it someplace with better facilities, they would be able to uncover its contents at once.

The two of them carefully preserved that entry of the diary, and with much weighing down on their minds, they left the ancient ruins behind them.



...Ancient times.

Shannon had climbed up to the roof of her mansion in the inner palace.

In that inner palace which had become something of a small city, each and every mistress had been afforded a mansion.

Hers wasn't anything massive, but she wasn't troubled with her living space.

It had been constructed extravagantly, to an extent, but with financial concerns in mind, it wasn't packed with any notable valuables.

Having climbed to the roof with a canvas in front of her, Shannon had an automaton Valkyrie stand to her side.

From the Valkyrie's eyes, she could read in information, and put it to brush. And what lay at the end of the Valkyrie's eyes were the forms of women.

The Valkyrie provided an enthusiastic commentary.

"On, and here spider woman Miranda uses her Skill to produce strings! Our brave competitor has been all wound up and is treated as a chair!"

Shannon sounded proud.

"Nice work, sis."

Lyle had twenty five mistresses.

As their numbers hadn't grown from the early days, the faces hadn't changed.

But be that as it may, that didn't mean there weren't any fights in the inner palace.

"Oh, they are voicing their surrender. She gets out the documents without a moment's delay. It does seem she intends to bind her tightly by contract as well!"

One of the mistresses had gotten in over her head... only to be restrained by force.

Starting with the legal wife Novem, the women who had accompanied Lyle across the battlefield included many seasoned in real battle. For that sake, brute strength was highly emphasized in the inner palace.

"Hmm, it's because she made light of me that it came to this."

The Valkyrie's body twisted in delight at Shannon's blatant trash-worthy attitude.

“What wonderful pettiness. I wonder why none of the chicks ever inherited that hopelessness of yours...”

Shannon stroked up her violet hair. But at that time, she stuck some paint onto it. The Valkyrie gleefully wiped that paint away. She had tattled to her sister to attain victory over another mistress.

Whether they liked it or not, the relations between mistresses tied in directly to political matters. Within all that, Shannon was able to do whatever she wanted whenever she wanted.

Because all those dubious power balances and faction troubles were all just shoved straight onto Miranda.

There, the Valkyrie continued her commentary.

“What is this!? A chick jumps into the fray! He has burst into tears seeing a woman made a chair of and forced to sign a form! This is terrible! We must go to the chick’s aid at once.”

The Valkyrie requested reinforcements from her other sisters.

When she looked over at Miranda, she found her giving a gentle smile as she smoothed over the situation with the child who had just happened to run into them.

The two women who had been fighting said, ‘we were just playing around~’ and laughed so as not to give the young child any anxieties.

Whether it be Miranda or anyone else, they wouldn’t lay a hand on the children.

That was an unspoken rule in the inner palace.

If you tried to eliminate any of them as a political hindrance, you’d turn every Valkyrie working in the inner palace against you.

The doctrine of those girls were overly simple.

They held no loyalty towards any of the women.

Their only loyalty lay to Lyle... and to his children.

As an exception, Shannon who they hoped would have a hopeless child was treated somewhat specially among them.

They usually looked as if they were just playing around, these automatons with Monica as their leader. But if you made enemies of them, they were truly troublesome existences.

If any mistress was going to harm a child, that mistress really would be gotten rid of. What's more, in a way that Lyle wouldn't notice.

The mistresses understood where their loyalty lay.

...Shannon was an exception.

"That kid... whose kid was he again?"

Twenty five brides pretty much meant there were twenty five families coexisting.

But there was only one head of the household- only one husband.

The Valkyrie replied at once.

"He is a chick from Eva-san's place. Those lovable ears are the giveaway. Like... if you nibble on them, he acts all shy, and a report has been raised that it is simply adorable."

"Seriously, what are you people doing with your time? Are you idiots?"

Called an idiot by an idiot, the Valkyrie did not seem angry.

More than that, she made a gesture as if putting an ear in-between her lips, and let out a sigh as she muttered, 'let me nibble on them too... '

Meanwhile, the picture diary depicted a scene of Miranda having wound up the other mistress, her pen approaching the document.

Shannon was all on board, and she depicted Miranda's troubled face before the child in the written portion of it.

The Valkyrie noticed.

“But if she sees this, would it not be troublesome for you?”

Shannon stopped her hand, and dropped her brush.

The brush fell onto the roof, and rolled all the way down its incline until it dropped and fell onto Lyle’s head.

“Shannon! You again!? Get down here!”

Lyle- who’d come to retrieve a forgotten item- gripped the brush as he shouted complaints at Shannon on the roof.

“Shut it! Get back to work! Fool!”

As Shannon got into a verbal brawl with Lyle, she gave an order to the Valkyrie.

“A-anyways, let’s store today’s entry separately. Just hide it under the shelf or something. If my sister finds it, she’ll get angry!”

Even though she’d already grown to a fine age, Miranda was still getting angry at Shannon.

And from time to time, her kids got angry at her as well.

Climbing down from the roof, Shannon went to restart her fight with Lyle, and the Valkyrie saw her off.

Looking at the completed diary entry in her hands, she thought over where to hide it.

“...I guess I shall stash it in the reference room.”



“How could this be?”

The professor held his head.

Upon confirming the contents of the document, he could tell it had come from the famous 【Genius Painter of Tragedy】 , Shannon.

His assistant was excited. But upon reading the contents, he was left dumbfounded.

“When you think of Miranda, she’s supposed to be the number two among the wives, and a full-fledged VIP, right? Shannon’s blood sister... including sisters in his harem, that emperor really did whatever he wanted.”

The professor sighed.

“There were some rumors she wasn’t the most savory character... but I never thought they would be true.”

Miranda’s evaluation in the world to come let out a shattering sound as it fell to pieces.

“Professor, the fact that she hid it must mean...”

The professor continued on from his assistant’s words.

“I know. I’m sure she wanted to tell the world the truth. The truth of the inner palace just as it was... in place of that poor genius painter of tragedy, we must make this known.”

The two of them burned with a sense of duty.

A single diary entry had dealt a large blow to Miranda’s evaluation.

Miranda (° 言 °): “...Shannon?”

Shannon 。 ・ ° ・ (ノ ㏿) ・ ° ・ 〇 : “Sis, just listen to me! It’s coming out. Sevens Volume 4 is finally coming out! We can finally make our reservations! It’s our turn to come out!”

Miranda (# ・ ♡ ・): “This month... looks like it’ll be released February 27th. Well now, that is some wonderful news.”

Shannon (‘♡ ` *): “We’re even appearing on the cover. We did it, sis!”

Miranda (‘㏿‘㏿ ☆))㏿) FWAP: “But that is that, and this is this.”

Intermission

Erhart 2

Erhart Baumann was a nice guy worthy of his tank top.

He had received a splendid title of 'Free Knight' from the empire, and he was an adventurer with trus Skill.

Today once more, he found himself musing over how wonderful his cross-backed tank top felt as it squeezed down over his superbly trained body.

He had dropped by the imperial capital under the call of Lyle- who'd become an emperor not too long ago- and thinking today was the right day to make his way home, he awaited the departure of his coupled carriage.

He had bought a ticket, boarded a carriage set for Beim, and taken his seat.

"When I get back, I really have to do something about my party."

Female adventurers approaching the latter half of their marriageable years.

But all their sights were set on Erhart, and an intense feud between them was carrying out within the party.

At this rate, the party might break apart.

"No, why not just break it up and be free..."

Would it really matter if he just ran away like that? Rejecting such an appealing proposal within him, the man was undergoing quite a psychological conflict when he heard the voice.

"L-let go of me!"

"You're coming with us!"

A woman in a hood was surrounded by three men a little ways away from the coupled carriage. As he lent them an eye, they disappeared into the crowds.

Erhart violently scratched his hair.

“Dammit! I shouldn’t have looked over.”

But since he’d seen it, he had no choice but to help, thought he as he stood and hopped down from the carriage. But only after telling the coachman to depart without him if he didn’t make it back in time.



It was a narrow gap between buildings.

Dimly lit, the trash bins left around caused a rotten stench to linger in the air.

“...I’m not going back. If I go back now, I’ll be...!”

The woman showed her rejection before the three men.

“We’ll be troubled if you keep selfish like that.”

“Do you plan to seek salvation from his imperial highness?”

“Even if you make a plea, I doubt the emperor will move.”

The men seemed relatively lax. And they seemed somewhat tired of the woman.

Hanging her head, the woman bit her lower lip...

The one who appeared to her was Erhart, his large sword over one shoulder.

“Oy, wait right there. Don’t you feel embarrassed, three of you ganging up on one woman?”

In regards to Erhart’s provocations, the three men seemed somewhat panicked. But once Erhart had entered that narrow space, one replied.

“This is our problem. We’d appreciate you stayed uninvolved.”

On the presumed leader's words, Erhart narrowed his eyes.

"Don't like the look of this at all. That's enough reason for me to involve myself. Or do you have your reasons?"

The men were lost for words, and it was clear there was something dark lingering behind them.

"In that case..."

Erhart approached, and while the three men had weapons at their hips, they came at him with their bare hands.

Their movements were trained, the movements of those accustomed to battle.

"If it's three on one...!"

As the three men came at him in that narrow alley, Erhart intercepted with his hands as well.

They were strong, but it's not as if the Free Knight title was something Lyle had simply handed out on a whim.

Erhart was strong, and had earned it from his growth as an adventurer... and as a person.

While it definitely was interesting, and there was some level of harassment alongside Lyle's personal feelings involved... anyways, Erhart was strong.

"Glad you could make it simple for me."

Striking them down, and laying them to rest on the dirty ground, Erhart let out a light breath.

"I'm sure the coupled carriage's already left."

There, the woman leapt into Erhart's chest.

"Eh? U-um... little lady, just because someone saved you, that doesn't mean you should trust a man so easily..."

He grabbed the shoulders of the woman who had came at him, and as he tried to push her away, her hood slipped off.

Her violet hair swayed, letting off a hint of perfume.

Clouded eyes, and soft looking lips... were there before him.

“For Erhart-sama to be the one to come to my rescue.”

The flushed face of Annerinne.



An inn of the imperial capital.

Erhart was holding his head.

The reason being, on top of the royal princess Annerinne coming to the capital, that very princess was the target of some group or another.

It was nothing but trouble.

“...You want to return to Lorphys at once?”

What’s more, he couldn’t rely on his dastardly acquaintance Lyle.

Since Annerinne was troubled, of course Erhart had proposed he talk to Lyle himself.

However...

“Yes. And if those sorts are moving their hands around the imperial capital, I cannot seek aid from his majesty.”

Before Annerinne’s downcast eyes, Erhart scratched his hair.

(Is it something political? Come to think of it, it’s not like the emperor can do anything, or so Lyle told me. Meaning she has some circumstance where even Lyle can’t help out?)

She had come to the capital in search of help, but she had already met an attack.

“I was careless. If only I’d kept a better watch...”

Seeing her vexed face, Erhart folded his arms, and looked up at the ceiling in thought. But when he recalled the fact that he was an idiot, he could only let out a deep sigh.

“Erhart-sama?”

To Annerinne’s worried glance, Erhart directed a smile.

“Don’t mind it. I was just about to return myself. I’ll safely deliver you to Lorphys.”

Locking her hands in front of her chest, Annerinne looked like she would burst into tears at any moment as she voiced her thanks again and again.

(I hope her pursuers don’t come after us. Though I doubt that’s happening.)

Could he protect her alone?

Erhart hardened his resolve, and decided to make for Lorphys alongside Annerinne.



Right around that time.

In the palace, Lyle held an audience with the three men.

Leader of the guards Baldoir seemed irritated as he looked at the three conspicuously injured men. For normally, they wouldn’t be the sort allowed to hold a meeting with Lyle.

“Y-your imperial highness...”

Before the representative of the three worried men, Lyle stood from his seat.

“I don’t need a preface. I’ll play fool to the fact you raised a ruckus in my city. But is that really the truth?”

The men nodded frantically with their bruised faces.

Lyle put a hand to his chin.

“I knew it would be a pain, but to think Erhart would...”

Baldoir offered advice to Lyle.

“Your majesty, this matter isn’t one we should involve ourselves in. This is Lorphys’ problem, and...”

Lyle held up a hand to stop him, and he sent a glance to the maid keeping herself to the background of the room.

Monica silently gave a curtsy and left the room.

“Baldoir, do you know what I want to say?”

In contrast to Baldoir’s blatant displeasure, Lyle made a thin smile. Baldoir clenched his hand and closed his hand.

“I’d be troubled if I gain any more political fetters. But if it’s someone of Erhart’s caliber...”

Free Knight Erhart... recalling the face of his dear friend, Lyle gave a warm smile.

And once his expression turned serious, Lyle turned to look at the three men attempting to shrink their bodies.

“You raised some noise in the capital. So I’ll be putting you three to work.”

The three men desperately lowered their heads to Lyle.

“Now then, it’s been quite a while since things got fun around here.”

Erhart was moving, and Lyle was moving as well.

Those movements with Lorphys at the center would one day bring an influence to the entire continent.

Monica *pant* (*'㐤`) *pant*: "My chicken dickwad is too dreamy! That aside, Sevens Volume 4 will be on sale February 27th! They're already taking reservations!"

Monica (*ノ∀ノ): "This time holds some heartwarming developments with the harem, and with this and that, there are some depictions that will sweeten the insides of your mouths! I hope you enjoy the differing published version of Sevens as well."

Monica (∀`*)ノシ: "And that is all. I shall now put the shameless plug back in."

Intermission

Erhart 3

(N/A)

Intermission

So I Tried Asking My Ancestors 1

It was in the Jewel, the round table room.

The ancestors were troubling Lyle, raining him with their usual jeers.

[That's why you're no good!]

[I'll have to agree. Why did you run away there?]

[I really wonder what that makes you as a man.]

[The worst. You've crossed zero into the negatives. The negatives!]

[Just sleep with her already. That'll be the end of it.]

[Lyle, you need to understand a woman's heart better.]

[Sixth, please repeat those words in front of a mirror. But Lyle, that really was pitiful.]

It all started in an inn in Dalien, where Lyle had managed to make a good atmosphere with Novem.

But Lyle himself failed to notice so, and fed up as she was, Novem dealt with him with a smile.

The problem was, having witnessed that, the ancestors dragged Lyle into the Jewel to find fault with him.

Lyle was made to kneel on the floor as he hung his head.

"But there's no way I could understand that sort of atmosphere, or rather..."

The Fourth pushed up his glasses, letting the lenses eerily catch the light as he let out a low voice.

[An excuse eh... this is worse than I thought.]

Ever fussy when it came to the treatment of women, the Fourth had been dissatisfied with Lyle's attitude towards Novem for a long time now.

[Listen well, Lyle! When things were going so rosy between you, not doing anything at all is a discourtesy to the woman.]

His socialization skills disastrous from the start, Lyle impatiently put up resistance against the Fourth.

“No, um... Novem’s face was definitely a little red, and her smile was a different one than usual, but... I didn’t really get what to do next or rather, in a situation where you’re all watching me, I’m not really sure what I’m supposed to do.”

The excuse Lyle gave was that he was unable to do anything in a situation where he was under constant surveillance from the ancestors in the Jewel.

But that was something the others agreed with as well.

The Fifth gave a light nod.

[Well, that’s definitely a problem.]

The other ancestors held a similar opinion.

The Fifth...

[Sure enough, I’d be troubled to respond if you suddenly embraced her. Well, if we just make it so we can’t interfere at those times alone...]

As everyone began to say something like that, Lyle found it in himself to question it a bit.

(They’re all just booing me, but generally speaking, what should I have done?)

That’s why he asked.

“Umm...”

The First irritably looked at Lyle.

[What is it?]

“I still don’t get what I should have done. How would all of you have handled umm—
‘What would you do when your wife shows you a different smile than usual?’”

The ancestors were more flustered than Lyle expected. They all tried imagining a scene where their wife would show them a different smile than usual.

...It happened.

Right after, Lyle sensed the large jewel embedded in the center of the round table let off a faint light.

(What is this? Did something just glow? Huh? Did the others see...)

Noticing something strange was going on, Lyle looked at his ancestors.

The First had broken into a clearly strange sweat as he held his head.

It was almost as if everyone was seeing an illusion of their wife before their eyes.

[T-that ain’t it, dear. So you don’t have to approach me with that smile. I’m begging you, forgive meeeeeeeee!!]

The Second shook his head as he prepared to flee. While he usually dressed himself in a relatively taciturn air, he was now desperately calling out to his unseen wife.

[Just give me a moment. Yeah, could you give me just a bit of time to think? D-don’t come any closeer!!]

The Third was smiling as per usual, but he was shedding a cold sweat.

With both his hands, he gestured for the other party to wait as he spoke.

[I got it, let’s talk things out. So for now, how about you stop spinning around the iron ball? Let’s start by clearing up our misunderstandings.]

(Iron ball!? Eh? He’s talking to his wife, right?)

Lyle looked at the cowering figures of his firm ancestors as he thought of just what sort of people his ancestors’ wives could be.

Meanwhile, the Fourth slipped under the round table, his body hunched over and quivering.

For a while, now, he was only repeating the same words.

[I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sor-]

The fifth alone wasn't sweating. But with a straight face...

[...What are you planning?]

In a situation with his wife showing a different smile than usual, he could only hold doubt. Perhaps he wondered what lay beneath that smile, as he seemed deep in thought to probe it out.

(...What happened to everyone? Could it be they really are seeing illusions?)

They were in the Jewel. A space where it wouldn't be strange if anything happened.

As he thought that, Lyle searched out the Sixth.

"Huh? The Sixth is gone?"

...The Sixth had fled long ago.

The Seventh was making a pale face, his back was straight, but he seemed somewhat fidgety.

[Zenoir, hear me out. You don't have to approach me with that smile. Stop. You have to stop! I get it. It's about that, right? About when I told Maizel that embarrassing story about you? Eh? That's not it? That's extra? Alright, first let's take some distance from one another so we can discuss this. S-stop! Don't point the gunpoint this way!]

(Gunpoint... grandmother was surprisingly extreme.)

Zenoir was Lyle's grandmother. But Lyle only had the impression of her as a kind grandmother.

Perhaps seeing illusions, the ancestors tormented by their wives.

Lyle calmly looked at them and thought.

“...I wonder what sort of people the ancestors’ wives were.”

Intermission

So I Tried Asking My Ancestors 2

[Remember this, I was a domineering husband who didn't give a damn for his family.]

A pale-faced first Generation Head said as he cleared his throat. I kneeled in the round table room as I listened to such a talk.

When the flustered ancestors returned to their senses, they began giving me excuses.

“So um, your wife, or rather, my ancestor was a person who fit the Walt Family Precepts, right?”

[...That's right.]

The Walt Family Precepts.

They were treated as the precepts for selecting a wife. As the Walt House had historically never seen a man marry in to be head, the six entries were naturally treated solely as a criterion for wives.

The women who passed them would have to be beautiful with healthy body and good intellect... however, from the reactions from the heads of history, it felt a little unnatural for them.

They looked to be exceedingly fearful.

They would usually chide me, rile others, and act without shame, but when it came to their wives, this attitude...

Something was definitely up.

“What sort of people were they? I'm curious~.”

The First's expression curved doubtfully.

It seems the other surrounding the First were interested as well. But when it came to his son, the Second, he simply touched a hand to his chin in intrigue.

[She was definitely an amazing person. Fit the precepts spot on. I mean, on the day she married in, she dueled this idiot's sword with her glaive and fought him to a draw.]

The First's slumped shoulders twitched.

Perhaps recalling it, he shut his mouth and turned away.

There, the Third sounded rather amused.

[She was a kind granny to me. She was a little sullen, but she was generally kind. I heard she came from a place quite far north, and her seasonings were fundamentally thick.]

The Walt House territory was located in the southern region of Bahnseim.

The southwest, to be more specific, boasting a relatively warm climate.

In the north...

[Do you mean Cartaffs? On top of all the skirmishes we have with them, I'm sure we've had a number of major battles with them as well, right?]

As the Fifth spoke from memory, the Second gave a big nod.

[When she made the trek all the way down, low in status as she was, as a noble and as a knight, the first thing she sought from her husband was naturally strength. She was the sort of person who couldn't recognize her husband unless he was strong, apparently.]

Apparently... does that mean from the Second's eyes, the First's wife looked different?

Well, perhaps she recognized the First because he managed a draw.

"Huh? And wait... First, you got a draw with your wife? Did you hold ba—"

[– Hell no.]

The downcast First quietly muttered.

Everyone looked at the First in surprise. This person fought seriously with a woman and ended up with a draw? But it couldn't be that the First was weak.

I mean despite everything, he was the famed dragon killer.

He was strong... he was supposed to be.

[At the time, with the shock from my heartbreak, and my neglectful lifestyle, I had a lot going wrong in life. I really was down in the dumps... that's why I made a ruckus over those precept things over my drink. Normally, you know, I never thought they'd actually find someone.]

The First held his head, but we were the ones who really wanted to hold ours. Because of the First, those Walt House precepts were carefully passed down.

The Fourth let his glasses catch the light, condemning the First in a low voice.

[You're the worst. In that case, you could've just said those precepts were a lie and revoked them.]

The First shut his mouth.

There, the Second looked at the First's door of memories.

[...Hey. If everyone's interested, why don't we have a look?]

The First suddenly stood and tried to resist.

[Can it! And wait, why are you here!]

The runaway Sixth had returned before I realized it, teaming up with the Third and Seventh to pin the First's arms.

[Don't sweat the small stuff. Now let's all go have a look at the mother of the provincial Walt House.]

The Fifth looked at the Sixth with a conflicted expression and muttered.

[That guy gets up on his high horse whenever he spots someone's weakness.]

Sixth... you're the worst.

While the First resisted, we entered the First's room of memories one after the next.

[Stop it right there! Don't screw with me, dammitt!!]

While the First desperately cried out, his efforts were in vain as he was apprehended and led off to the other side.

[Don't look. You'd better not look!!]



A scene of a tranquil farming village spread out.

The Walt House in its pioneering era. Having only just been set up as feudal nobles, it could be said the Walt House started from there.

Yet despite the peaceful scenery, both sides of the country road were lined with muscular men. While there were men who looked like barbarians, there were also those who looked to be the normal villagers who lived in the village.

And down the farm road walked a single woman.

Her long brown hair in a ponytail, a woman of splendid build walked. Behind her, two female attendants followed along, and even further back, a man carrying a heavy-looking glaive made himself scarce.

The lines of men lowered their heads all at once.

[Good work, boss!]

Their voices in unison. Those movements without a strand of disjointment.

While they looked like a coordinated group, the wounds on the men's faces stood out.

The Second was taken aback.

[Eh? What's this picture?]

It seemed to be a scene the Second didn't know either, and having now stopped his resistance, the First sat where he was and hid his face.

[She fought with me on the first day, and duked it out with anyone who had complaints the next. I thought it was a laid-back village on the outskirts, but it's got some splendid spunk! She told me. And then no one was against it... goddammit.]

After a glance at the men, the woman gave a small nod.

[You're all spirited so early in the morning. Now get back to work already!]

The men indeed returned to their own work.

The Third looked at the threatening First's wife... 【Amanda】 , his mouth opened in surprise.

[Granny's scary!]

The First looked at the Third and cried out.

[You guys have it easy! You only knew her after she mellowed out. When she was young, that girl was really-]

At that moment, Amanda-san arrived at a manor in the village. After taking a deep breath, she took the Glaive her follower was holding- it would be more accurate to call a lump of iron with a blade attached- in hand, slamming the portion opposite to the point into the ground and wringing out her voice.

[How long do you plan to cry like a girl, Basil!? Get your ass out here already! If you don't get out, I'll destroy the door and drag you out!]

The First covered his face with both hands. He was red to his ears.

There, the First of memories... Basil unsteadily and drunkenly teetered his way out.

[Shyat it 'ya wench! I've got me heart set on a splendid girl called alic-san~]

Approaching a Basil who couldn't articulate over his drink, Amanda-san grasped his lapels and lifted the large man up.

What's more, with one hand.

[Give it a rest already! I already finished preparing to marry in. Just shut up and make me your wife.]

[I don't want thaaaat!!]

The First broke into tears. It did seem he still had thoughts for Aria's ancestor Alic-san.

The Seventh muttered.

[What a terrible sight.]

...Sure enough, the sight of a large man crying from heartbreak was definitely pitiful. What's more, a considerable amount of time was supposed to have passed from said heartbreak.

Amanda breathed out a sigh, looking down at Basil. As he similarly sat on the spot, Basil definitely did bear resemblance to the First Generation Head after all.

Seeing Basil's unshaven face, and his body that definitely didn't seem in the best of health, Amanda-san shouted orders to the attendants behind her.

[Now go in the manor and clean the place up. Good grief, when I've searched far and wide and finally found someone who can lock blades with me, to think he'd be this girly. Get a grip on yourself! You're going to be my husband, you know.]

Basil wept.

[I'd prefer someone more graceful and kind...]

[What was that!? I'm plenty graceful and kind. Or do you want to fight me seriously for once?]

Basil looked up at Amanda-san.

[...Damn, where did I go wrong.]

As he said that, he was lifted up again and shaken back and forth. The result: beaten down by her persistence, the First let Amanda-san into the mansion.

Looking down at her slumpen groom to be, Amanda-san declared.

[Just leave the house to me. I'll make it so the man of the house can rampage to his heart's content. Do anything stupid, and you won't forget it!]

[...Yes ma'am.]

After looking at Basil, I turned my eyes to the first.

"Domineering husband."

When I softly muttered, the First narrowed his shoulders to make himself smaller.

Looking at that heroine... Amanda-san, the ancestors had formed a circle to discuss.

[Oy, don't tell me the reason this house's women are so strong is...]

[Yeah, it just might be... granny's fault.]

[The possibility exists. In the sense she formed the atmosphere of the Walt House, there's no doubt that...]

[The wives were all normal before they married in after all. I just saw the moment a terrible custom was formed.]

[When they all used to be so kind, so this is why they all changed when they married into the Walt House.]

[Sixth, that's something else. I can't stick up for you on that.]

It seems the other Walt wives of history had their share of problems as well.

(...Is the Walt House going to be alright?)

~Past~

Lyle (° ∇ °): “Domineering Husband lolol”

First Generation Head (# ° ∂ °): “Bastard! Fine... let’s take this outside!”

~Present~

Lyle (´ ; ω ;): “...Someone save me. My wives are scary. My stomach hurts.”

Lyle (´ ; ω ; `): “...”

Intermission

So I Tried Asking My Ancestors 3

A day in the Jewel, the round table room.

[My wife was normal.]

So spake the Second, the man who called himself plain.

The First had ended up showing everyone his wife, his shoulders slumped after it came to life his domineering husband schtick was a lie. But in regards to the Second's words...

[BS!]

The Third laughed along.

[Yep, that's a lie.]

They came to the unanimous conclusion the Second's words were a lie.

With two denying it, the heads of history Fourth onwards directed skeptical looks at the second.

[I'm not lying! She really was normal. She's the wife I found after so long. Do you think I'd bring in someone so strange?]

A tired Fourth spoke contrary to that opinion.

[You sure you didn't compromise because you couldn't find anyone else?]

The Fifth gave a belittling laugh.

[That would be you, Fourth.]

The parents and children of the Walt House really didn't get along. Well, perhaps the Second's opinion was just. I'm sure it would be quicker to just look into it.

"Wouldn't it be quicker to have a look?"

[.....Say what?]

When everyone had confirmed the First's memories, it seems he was under the impression no one would be looking into his.

The First leisurely stood.

[Well said, Lyle! That's right. From there start, there was no need for me to be the only one to have to go through this. Now that it's come to this, we're going to go around and have a peek at everyone's wives.]

The ones who went pale at those words were the Sixth and Seventh.

The Sixth's gaze swam around.

[No matter how you look at it, we really don't have to confirm everyone...]

The Seventh was the same.

[That's right. It's not like I have any interesting episodes to share.]

But the First put a hand on their shoulders and grinned.

[You're trying to run away, aren't you? I can tell.]

Without taking no for an answer, the First chucked both of them into the Second's door of memories.

[And we're off!]

Leaving the Second behind, the three of them had disappeared behind. The Third shrugged his shoulders, giving him a push on the back.

[You're not going to leave them be, are you?]

The Second shoulders dropped terribly low.

The Fourth and Fifth,

[This sounds like fun. We really must see what sort of ‘normal’ the Second is talking about.]

[I agree. Let’s go, Lyle.]

“Ah, sure.”

Once everyone had passed through the Second’s door of memories, the scene that unfolded out was a long shot from normal.



The gentle landscape of a farming village.

The Walt House started out as newly cultivated soil. The savage lands had been cut open for that sake, and you could say this was an era where the people were desperate to spread out the fields.

But the scenery was filled with lush greenery.

In a place where such a tranquil backdrop spread out, the two women snarled at one another.

On the farm road, they each took a stance with weapon in hand.

One was Amanda... the First’s wife. She held her glaive in her right hand, pointing at the woman with her left.

[How many times do I have to say it before you understand? You’re peddling us water, little girl!]

She had put on some years since the last time I saw her, but even so, she held her back straight and her muscular build had not changed.

She was the same heroine as ever. Just how many years had passed since the time she married the First...

The one who stood against Amanda-san was a woman holding a large metal ring.

Her deep green hair was straight and long. Her silky follicles swayed gently in the breeze.

Her drooping gentle eyes might normally give of what I might call the impression of a kind older sister... and yet, perhaps I could call it pure rage, but her expression was terrifying.

[Oh, how many times must I say it back. Your northern spices are a straight punch to the face. My husband and father in law drink my soup without a complaint.]

[You've got some nerve, little girl.]

As Amanda-san took a large step in, swiping horizontally with her iron lump of a glaive, the woman... 【Mynerinne】 jumped up

Purposely unhanding the metal ring in her hands, when she pointed her palm upward, the metal ring floated above it and began to spin.

The sound of its rotation tore through the air, and wait, it was letting off the sort of shrill sound you wouldn't normally get to hear from plain rotation.

[Nosy in-law!]

Swinging her left hand, the ring maintained its rotation as it flew straight at Amanda-san.

She hit it aside with her glaive.

Sparks flew, and as Mynerinne-san landed, the villagers gathering around...

[The boss and the mistress, eh. They never get tired of it.]

[At least the house is still intact.]

[Have you ever seen those two get along?]

Holding their farming tools, the men heading to work fled to the side so as not to be

caught up in the fighting. No, they were trying their best to stay out of it.

But their wives were different. Each one of them rooted for their own generation.

[Boss, don't lose to the young'un!]

[Blow that old lady away!]

Quite the radical statements were flying around.

The repelled metal ring gouged into the road and the glaive smashed in after it.

[We won't be able to use that road for a while.]

The one who muttered it as he headed for work was Basil, whose white hairs were starting to stand out. Rather, the First didn't try to get involved either.

[What is this...]

I don't know whose voice it was. But it was the representative voice of the heads of history.

When I hurriedly turned, I found the other ancestors at a loss for words. But the First and Third were all too familiar with that scene...

[Do you think this is normal? Well I sure as hell don't.]

[In my case, I've been watching it from the moment I was born, so I'm used to it. At first, mom was at a disadvantage, but once her Skill manifested, it became equal. Though it seems it took a long while of trial and error after she got the Skill.]

Wait, you can't be telling me she manifested a Skill and polished it to fight her mother-in-law?

I looked at the Second.

"Second, by normal..."

[O-of course you'd think not if this was the only thing you saw! This wasn't an everyday occurrence you hear! Twice a week at most.]

The Second frantically explained, but two wife battles per week? Seriously? What's more, repairing those destroyed roads looked like a job in itself.

The Second cleared his throat.

[N-now our usual lives, you see...]

Once the scenery turned a shade of gray, Amanda-san lowering her glaive and Amanda-san parrying it with her ring froze in place.

Once the two in the midst of close combat faded away, a scene inside the mansion spread out.



[Oh my, don't you think this flavoring is too light?]

It was a scene at the dinner table. In what was supposed to be a happy family get-together, a tense air flowed through.

The Second held his head.

[Why is it showing this scene!? We weren't always like that!]

Amanda-san's statement caused Mynerinne-san's eyebrow to twitch.

[I even made it on the thicker side this time.]

There, the Second of memory... Crassel frantically followed through for her.

[T-this much is just about right for me.]

Hearing that from Crassel, Amanda-san gave up her pursuit, but still unsatisfied with it, she turned to look at her two grandchildren.

[Dewey, Sleigh, what do you two think?]

There Basil...

[Hey, no need to drag the grandkids into–]

[Dear, pipe down.]

[...Yes ma'am.]

Even there, the domineering husband (lol) Basil was ignored, but the problem was the two boys. The Third spoke with a smile.

[The pressure back then was incredible.]

Mynerinne-san stood.

[Won't you cut it out already?]

Amanda-san stood as well.

[Oh, you want to go at it? You want to have a go? Very well. Grab your weapon and get outside! I'll teach you who really looks after this house!]

Upon hearing her tone, I could only think the fact she mellowed out after having a child was a lie.

As the two retrieved their weapons, Crassel frantically headed to call them back.

But it was at that moment...

[Hic.]

Sleigh burst into tears. Perhaps weak to a child's tears, both Amanda-san and Mynerinne-san tucked away their armaments.

[...In honor of my grandchild's face, I'll let you off for today.]

[Well thanks for that. Sleigh, your granny was scary, wasn't she? I'm sorry you had to see that.]

I got the feeling Mynerinne-san was riling Amanda-san even after it was over.

The Second looked upon the scene,

[Don't tell me you were already a schemer back then?]

The Third laughed suggestively.

[And if I was? But that managed to stop the fights a number of times, so doesn't it all work out?]

There, the Fourth touched a hand to his chin.

[Even so, great grandmother's manner of speech... it's similar to my mother and wife's. The way she said the same thing twice to rile her up.]

The Sixth had noticed as well.

[My wife did that too!]

The Seventh as well.

[I've heard it before as well! I get the feeling Claire might have said it once or twice?]

The Fifth got it all together.

[So even a wife's way of riling an in-law was passed down. I guess there are some truths in the world you're better off not knowing.]

~Past~

Fifth Generation Head (; ° 𐄂 °): "Now that I think about it, the Walt House House has an overwhelming number of truths better left unsaid."

Lyle (° 𐄂 °): "Starting with the First's precepts. The no-good portions really do stand out. I'm surprised we were able to become Bahnseim's strongest like that."

Sixth Generation Head (丿 'ω`): "You don't get it Lyle. Tempered in harsh soil, even the

women polish themselves by battling their mother-in-laws... there's no way we wouldn't become the strongest."

Lyle (; ° Д°): "I must have it real easy, now that I don't have to carry on the trend."

~Present~

Lyle (´ ; ω ;): "...Who was it? Who's the bastard who said I wasn't going to carry on the Walt House trend? I'm the one who inherited it most strongly, dammit!"

Novem (#° Д°): "By the Walt House Precepts!!"

Miranda (#° Д°): "Shut it fool!! Let's take this outside!!"

Novem (*'∀ `): "Oh, are you mad? You're mad, aren't you? Very well, I shall accompany you out for the duel you desire."

Monica (° ∇°)o ≧°: "Now fight! Fight more! Leave only the chicken dickwad and his chicks behind, and disappear!"

Shannon φ(• ω • `): "Dear diary, today was a normal day."



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